



Page 15 Master of magic balls
Jiuji, one of China's four masters of contact juggling, dreams of starting his own circus.



Pages 20-21 Last breath of autumn
Veteran hikers designed a special trip to see the best of the season in north Beijing and Hebei.

35 years in China



Uwe Kraeuter is well-known in Chinese as "Wuwei," husband of Chinese actress Shen Danping. Their love and marriage was a story repeated thousands of times in mass media. But this time, Kraeuter's newly-published memoir tells a story far more complicated.

The story began in 1974, when Kraeuter narrowly evaded seeing German prison by seizing an opportunity to work at the Foreign Language Press in Beijing. Since then, his fate has been entwined with China's.

Looking back, Kraeuter says he never imagined the best years of his life would be spent exclusively in China, a land once regarded by the West as "further away than the moon."

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Spent bulbs a sleeping eco disaster

By Li Zhixin

Despite being the world's largest producer of energy-saving bulbs, the country has absolutely nothing in place to facilitate their recycling.

In a recent survey by *China Business News*, nearly 90 percent of consumers dump their energy-saving bulbs with normal garbage.

"Most people know nothing about the dangers of mishandling spent energy-saving bulbs. Dead bulbs usually end up in landfills or incinerators," said Chang Yi, the secretary-general of Beijing Association of Lighting Industry.

While common energy-saving bulb may contain only half a milligram of mercury, its pollution potential is shocking.

"That half a milligram can pollute 1,000 liters of water and 300 cubic meters of air," Chang said. "There is about 1.4 billion energy-saving bulbs in China. If these go out with the garbage, they will be an ecological disaster."

Water that has been tainted with mercury can cause people and animals to develop Minamata disease, a condition characterized by severe neurological degeneration,



China faces potential danger from energy-saving bulb pollution due to a lack of recycling facility.

CFP Photo

tion, said Hao Fengtong, a doctor at Chaoyang Hospital.

Most bulbs are discarded by end users and manufacturers, said Jia Qiang, president of a bulb manufacturing company.

As of 2009, there were more than 6,000 energy-saving bulb manufacturers nationwide that produced 3.8 billion bulbs per year, a third of the total global output.

"About 3 percent of the bulbs

fail, so there are 100 million dead bulbs before they even leave the factory," he said. "China's consumer market discards another 500 million each year."

Chen Dahua, a professor in

the Institute for Electric Light Sources at Fudan University, said high technical requirements, huge costs and low economic returns make many companies unwilling to invest in the recycling circle. There are also no laws or regulations governing the disposal of spent bulbs.

"The government and environmental organizations should focus on public education. Bulb manufacturers should also collect spent bulbs to promote recycling," Chang said.

The Green Illumination Engineering Project, launched in 1996, promotes the use of compact fluorescent bulbs, metal halide bulbs and high-voltage sodium bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs are the most used, as they are five times brighter and eight times more durable than normal bulbs.

Lu Wenbin, director of the Energy Saving and Emission Reduction Department of National Development and Reform Commission, said the government installed 210 million energy-saving bulbs throughout the country using subsidies. The effort saved 8.8 billion kilowatt hours of energy per year.

New-energy cars face tough market

By Zhao Hongyi

Even with the government promoting the use of new-energy vehicles, the local market has been slow to respond.

For the 11th Five-Year Plan, the central government set a goal of putting 500,000 electric-powered, hydro-battery-powered and hybrid cars on the road by 2011 and 5 million to 10 million by 2020.

The government promised to subsidize purchases of new-energy vehicles by 5,000 to 60,000 yuan depending on the make and model purchased. It also urged provincial governments to offer their own subsidies.

In Beijing, the municipal government promised to install 36,000 charging pillars in the gas stations for new energy vehicles in 2011.

Encouraged by the government's enthusiasm, carmakers opened several new factories to make new-energy vehicles.

But that passion went out with a whimper.

During the first 10 months of the year, sales of passenger vehicles, including cars and business vehicles, totaled 11.1 million: fewer than 1,000 of these sales were of new-energy vehicles, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

"They have hardly sold since they came off the assembly line two years ago," said Li Xiaofan, sales manager of a dealership at Lishuiqiao on North Fifth Ring Road.

Li's dealership sells the

Changan hybrid electric vehicle (HEV), the first mixed-powered car designed by a domestic carmaker. The cars were priced between 130,000 and 150,000 yuan each with a 60,000 yuan subsidy from the central and provincial governments.

Changan sold only 900 of its HEVs in 2009 and zero in 2010. The manufacturer closed the factory earlier this year.

"I've never seen anyone buy a new-energy vehicle. Ever," Li said. "The domestic brands are unreliable and the imports from Japan are too expensive."

"Price is the critical problem with promoting the sales and use of new-energy vehicles," said Feng Fei, market researcher from the Economic Development Center under the State Council.

Pure electric vehicles receive a 60,000-yuan subsidy while hybrids receive only 3,000 yuan. Given fuel prices in China are among the world's lowest, it is hardly surprising that buyers were unwilling to splurge on costly hybrids, he said.

"Users do not want to pay for the benefits of energy savings they cannot see," the researcher said.

In China, hybrid car technology is the most sophisticated, though other new-energy cars are improving quickly, said Du Fangci, secretary general of the Automobile Association.

"But sophistication does not translate into sales," he said. "We have to give the buyers a tangible incentive to purchase."

Speed record the next target for country's rails

By Han Manman

Having already claimed the record for the world's longest high-speed railway network, the government is now aiming to set the world record for the fastest train next year, the Ministry of Railways announced at the seventh World Congress on High-Speed Rails in Beijing Tuesday.

The event, co-hosted by the Ministry of Railways and the International Union of Railways (UIC) to showcase high-speed railway development, was hosted outside Europe for the first time.

The latest record for a Chinese high-speed train was set last Friday by a CRH-380A train, which traveled 486.1 kilometers per hour during a test run on the Beijing-Shanghai route.

Most modern high-speed trains travel at speeds of about 350 kilometers per hour.

With faster trains comes an ambition to tap the world's high-speed railway market.

Xinhua reported that the country's manufacturers are in the process of developing a super high-speed train that can run at 600 kilometers per hour and believe their trains will soon snap at the heels of the 574.8 kilometers per hour speed record set by France in 2007.

Sun Zhang, a professor at the urban rail and railway engineering department of Shanghai's Tongji University, said the government approved plans to expand the nation's high-speed railways in 2004 with a goal of 200 kilometers per hour and beyond.

In the six years since, the country has developed the world's



China's bullet train, the CRH380A, is on display for the 7th World Congress on High Speed Rail in Beijing.

CFP Photo

longest high speed rail network at 7,351 kilometers.

It is expected to reach 13,000 kilometers by 2012 and 16,000 kilometers by 2020.

Sun said the country has been investing heavily to absorb high speed rail technology from around the world to achieve this goal.

"China spent six or seven years developing and upgrading high-speed railway technology imported from abroad. The country also made breakthroughs independently in many areas such as increasing cruising speed and enlarging carriage space," Sun said.

Several new programs announced at the three-day event, which closed yesterday, showed that many neighboring countries welcome the possibility of high-speed rail connections with China.

A railway linking Vientiane, capital of Laos, with the Laos-China border, may break ground in 2012, Somsavat Lengsavad,

standing deputy prime minister of Laos, said during the congress. The railway is part of a proposed high-speed rail network linking China and Singapore via Laos, Thailand and Malaysia.

The country also signed eight memorandums and agreements on railway cooperation with eight other countries, including Bulgaria and Turkey, during the congress.

On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, Chinese enterprises are trying to enter the US market.

General Electric announced a partnership with China South Locomotive & Rolling Stock to invest \$50 million into a US-based joint venture to make high-speed trains.

"The cooperation on high-speed rail enhances cooperation between nations, thus advancing the industry to a higher standard," said E. Grillo Pasquarelli, director of Inland Transport of the European Commission.

Plans to reopen hunting ground meets with criticism

By Chu Meng

Asia's largest hunting ground is returning to the capital's suburbs after being closed down 10 years ago after the enactment of wildlife protection and gun control laws, the Miyun County government announced Monday.

The county government submitted its plans to reopen the Yunxiugu Hunting Ground, located 160 kilometers from the city center. The hunting area includes more than 100 square kilometers of wilderness with an enclosed 4-square-kilometer hunting zone.

Opened in 1994, the business ran well in its first three years with a peak profit of 3 million yuan, said Wang Meng, a hunting guide from a local village.

But it was soon forced to close. "The biggest reason was that there were not many wild animals in the area, only rabbits and badgers. Beijing is not a place rich in wildlife," he said.

In prosperous years, Wang said he guided 20 clients a day. But clients were usually unsatisfied with the day's meager haul.

The hunting ground raised small and medium game like deer and foxes to seed the forest.

"But with fewer clients, we had no money to raise game. It ended up being a vicious circle that shut down the hunting ground," he said.

Regulations also made it harder to acquire bullets and guns from the county government and Public Security Bureau. "Sometimes it took us two months to pass the exams needed to approve another batch of bullets," he said.

To prevent misuse of the ammunition by civilians, the bureau required them to submit empty shells and casings each month.

"It was impossible for hunting guides. We were expected to trace and find all the shells and casings after they hit the ground," he said.

Wang Dawei, a professor from Chinese People's Public Security University said to Xinhua News Agency, said that "the country's strict policy to control guns and bullets that endanger public security has not been loosened and



Miyun County hopes to reopen Asia's largest hunting ground.

Photo provided by xcar.com.cn

will not be in the near future. Hunting businesses should be aware of this."

The plan was also criticized

by conservationists. Wang Zhongmin, director of the department of wildlife protection at the city's landscaping

bureau, said the hunting ground may have a difficult time getting a license due to increased wildlife protection laws.

QQ makers found liable in suicide pact

By Zhang Dongya

Tencent, makers of the popular QQ instant messenger client, has been asked to take responsibility for a suicide pact between two of its users.

Last Friday, Liandu District Court in Lishui, Zhejiang Province, found Tencent "10 percent responsible" for the deaths of two of its users. The company was ordered to pay 56,000 yuan as compensation to the surviving parent, CCTV reported last week.

Tencent chose not to appeal the ruling.

In early June, a QQ user in Zhejiang Province surnamed

Zhang posted to QQ's group chat seeking a companion in suicide. A student surnamed Fan at Shanghai Maritime University saw the message and contacted Zhang.

The two agreed to meet in a hotel on June 24 and decided to kill themselves by burning charcoal in their room.

During the act, Zhang complained about feeling unwell. He dumped water on the charcoal and told Fan he could not go through with it. Fan persisted and asked Zhang to light the charcoal again.

Zhang left the hotel alone at

about 5 pm. Six hours later, he called the hotel and told them one of their guests might be dead. When they checked the room, Fan was already dead.

According to the court's judgment, Fan is responsible for his own death, though Zhang has some civil liability for instigating and preparing the equipment used in the suicide.

Citing laws governing Internet security, the court ruled that Tencent too was liable for failing to moderate posts that could be harmful to the life and health of its users.

The 56,000-yuan penalty

was reached by adding damages, funeral expenses, transportation charges and mental anguish.

Tencent said the ruling raised questions about content monitoring and protection of privacy. The company said it does not have the ability or legal authority to monitor the communications of its users.

"I don't think the makers of a chat tool should be held liable. It is just a platform for communication," said Yin Fuchun, a lawyer at Long'an Law Firm in Beijing.

"People choosing to commit suicide is a social issue, not the direct fault of a chat tool. If

people made plans to kill themselves using SMS messages sent through China Mobile or China Unicom, should those companies also be held liable?" he said.

Some experts said the case showed how backward the law remains about Internet security.

"It is true that cyber law has developed far slower than the Internet. But this case really had nothing to do with the cyber law. The government should not be passing regulations that deprive more than a billion people of their rights to privacy and private communication," Yin said.

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Thinkers meet to build start-ups at iWeekend

By Annie Wei

Many people are like Ada Li, a 38-year-old former software developer at Sun Microsystems who says she has interesting ideas all the time.

However, Li said she never expected one of her ideas to become a feasible business plan.

Li joined the two-and-a-half-day iWeekend workshop held at Orange Lab, a French Telecom in Haidian District, from November 19 to 21. The event drew 80 people, 16 of whom gave a three-minute pitch of their ideas for a tech start-up.

The audience voted on their favorite ideas, and everyone joined up with the top three to work in teams with seven successful mentors from Silicon Valley: people like Stephen Wang, co-founder of Rotten Tomatoes and alivenotdead.com; Jonathan pally, co-founder of Idapted; and Steven Chiu, co-founder of zhaoping.com.

"I really love the idea behind it," said Lu Gang, a tech blogger from his blog at mobinode.com. Lu said that it was different from other start-up events where people just go to talk.

The organizers

The iWeekend Beijing site said it aims to bring together motivated software developers, business managers, start-up enthusiasts, marketing professionals and graphic artists to turn ideas into Web products within a weekend.

The event was organized by 28-year-old Swede Olof Nordenstam and his friends. Nordenstam is an entrepreneur who runs an online Scrabble game and community. He has been living in Beijing for two years.

He was inspired by a previous iWeekend he attended last year in Spain.

Nordenstam said the iWeekend program started in Spain three years ago. It has since been the incubator of several successful tech companies.

The number of tech entrepreneurs in China is small but growing, and the opportunities are vast. iWeekend is a great opportunity for people to get to know each other working side-by-side in an intense learning experience, he said.

"We feel that it is the perfect time to organize this kind of event in China. We hope to continue to build and contribute to the spirit of entrepreneurship here," Nordenstam said.

Zhang Renhe, a board member of Peking University's venture funding project, said there are more and more companies, organizations and institutions dedicated to helping young entrepreneurs begin a tech start-up.

"With China's current business environment, getting an investment is not the problem. There are lots of venture capitalists offering both money and talent," Zhang said.

Tech start-ups are the trend, and many in the business world believe traditional industries will only survive by embracing new tech platforms, she said.

Fun experience

Ada Li, who stopped by iWeekend out of curiosity, was proud to see her idea selected. Li heard about iWeekend Beijing through the geek gathering Openparty,



The three teams presented prototypes of their work on iWeekend's closing night.



The City Savvi team at work in the Orange Lab

Photos provided by iWeekend Beijing

where she is a member.

Li's idea was inspired by shopping on Taobao. Li likes clothes, reading fashion magazines and blogs. She liked the mix and match styles posted online.

"If I saw I had a similar outfit, I tried to find whichever pieces I was missing to achieve a similar look," she said. Banking on universal appeal of spending less to look great, Li had the idea to make an online tool that would analyze photos and find similar products sold by online vendors.

When Li's group started to work on the idea, they realized her dream tool would be a tech nightmare and decided to alter the idea into something more practical. They named their business N Kao Yi Zhuang, loosely translated as "Clothes make the woman."

"Most people in my team are software developers," Li said. "We soon found out we were short on people with a business and fashion background."

The mentors and organizers showed them similar websites already launched overseas. Boutiques.com, acquired by Google, was recently re-launched world-

wide in November.

When Li expressed doubt over any start-up's ability to survive competition with Google, mentors reminded her of the examples of Baidu and Tencent QQ, which continue to dominate the China market even after the emergence of Google China and Microsoft's MSN Messenger.

Another selected idea, City Savvi, was led by Fan Chengming, 27, a software engineer for a finance and IT company, and his friend Cheng Herman, a Canadian Chinese.

City Savvi is a user-friendly localized Q&A board to answer the questions of new expats. The site is compatible with Facebook, Twitter and Google accounts.

But City Savvi was also Fan and Cheng's initial idea. Their original idea was a website to help expats find safe, low-cost apartments.

"We got some business data wrong and we did not think it could be profitable," Fan said. But they turned their idea to a new model within 24 hours.

Fan's team of software developers and marketers was able to take the website

online within six hour.

Throughout the intense weekend, participants were expected to arrive at 9 am sharp and work until 10 pm or later. But all said the experience was exciting and that time passed quickly.

After the event

The three teams presented prototypes of their work on iWeekend's closing night. Participants were encouraged to keep refining their ideas and keep in touch with others and mentors.

Li's idea suffered crib death when she and her teammates lacked the full-time dedication needed to keep it running.

"Several mentors said the same thing – your idea is not that important; the most important thing is if you really want to do it and if you have the ability," Li said.

But she said she was still excited and inspired by the experience.

"I am sending emails to people we met through iWorkshop to see who can help take over the website full time," Fan said. He did receive some positive responses and said his team planned to meet this weekend to discuss.

"It was a great experience even if all the ideas didn't turn out to be a success. We got to meet a great group of people, and we might be able to help each other out in the future," Fan Chenming said.

But Fan said the first iWeekend was too expat oriented and did not bring in enough people from the local community.

"You have to go for the Chinese market. The expat community can be a way to test out your idea, but in the long term, the 1.3 billion people in the Chinese market have to be the target," said Steven Chui, founder of Zhaopin.com, a leading job website founded by Australians, then sold to a local company.

The first iWeekend was just a beginning. "We made some contacts in Shanghai and Hong Kong, so those might be natural locations for upcoming events. In the long term we want to see these events take place all over the country," Nordenstam said.

Chinese traditional medicine squeezes patients' pockets

China's continuous price inflation has turned Caterpillar fungus, one of the most exotic oriental traditional herb medicines, into new gold in the West.

The alleys of the Chrysanthemum Village medicine market in Kunming, Yunnan Province, are oddly quiet. Few inspect the counters and jars filled with exotic salves and cures, from dried bats and lizards to caterpillar fungus. Prices have been shooting up, but demand from ordinary consumers is not keeping pace.

Caterpillar fungus, an unusual medicine, consisting of the remains of a caterpillar from which a thin fungus of similar length has sprouted, is said to be a powerful aphrodisiac and antidote to fatigue. It is dug up on the Tibetan plateau, to the concern of environmentalists.

Speculation makes new gold

If people around the world are hoarding gold coins as protection against a possible surge in inflation, some in China are betting on caterpillar fungus.

The parasite found mainly on the Tibetan plateau has been used for centuries in parts of China to fight fatigue and as an aphrodisiac — one of its nicknames is "Himalayan Viagra."

It is also part of one of the latest speculative crazes to hit China's booming economy — medicinal herbs. Prices are now so high that a Chinese consumer could buy almost two grams of gold for the cost of one gram of some types of caterpillar fungus.

According to a report this week by the Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine, more than a quarter of the herbs used in Chinese medicine have increased in price by between 50 percent and 100 percent over the past year. For a small group of herbs, the increase has been more than 300 percent.

"There has definitely been speculation in the herbs market," said Feng Shihong, a researcher at the Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine. "But prices have been undervalued for a long time, which is also why they have increased."

Continuous inflation

The speculative boom in medicinal herbs is one of the backdrops to the recent surge in inflation in China, which rose to 4.4 percent in October. Fears that the government would announce the second rise in interest rates in a month, to contain inflationary pressures, prompted shares in mainland China to drop 5.2 percent on Friday.

Chinese officials have this week angrily criticized the US Federal Reserve's plans to inject a further \$600 billion into the US economy, which they say will help create bubbles in developing countries.

Plenty of critics at home, however, fear that loose domestic monetary policy is stimulating inflation. Chinese money supply expanded at nearly twice the rate of nominal GDP growth last year and the amount of new bank loans this year is likely to exceed the already generous target set by the government.

There is also considerable popular mistrust of headline inflation figures, which was fuelled this week when a Chinese think-tank published a report claiming the official consumer price inflation data understated the real rate of inflation by seven percent over the past five years because it did not properly capture rising costs for property and services.

(Financial Times and the Economist)



Chinese medicine is increasingly recognized outside of China.

Song Jianhao/CFP Photo

Analyst

Inflation is the last direct reason behind soaring price

By Chu Meng

Only blaming inflation for the skyrocketing price of traditional herbal medicines isn't reasonable, said Zhao Hong, senior economist at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences. Other factors, like natural disasters, increasing domestic demand and hot money speculation, have played more important roles.

Tibet and its neighboring provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan and Gansu are where most caterpillar fungi grow. But natural disasters, like the 7.1-magnitude Qinghai earthquake in April and severe droughts, have sapped these areas of their harvest.

"Caterpillar fungi are harvested in May and June," Zhao said.

Data from Xinhua News Agency showed that a drought in Tibet in 2009 reduced the annual production of caterpillar fungi to 36,000 kilograms, down 25 percent from 2008.

"The good news is prices have almost peaked, so they're set to fall, incumbent on a good harvest next year," Zhao said. So far, word is that the fungi out of Tibet and surrounding provinces are of good quality and ample in supply.

Increasing domestic demand has also driven up prices, as therapies employing traditional herbal medicines and herbal diets have risen.

"Especially among the younger Chinese generation, the number of people using traditional treatments for sickness is remarkable," said Wang Miaozi, professor at Beijing University of Chinese Traditional Medicine.

"They engage in health therapies using traditional Chinese medicine more than their parents, thanks to increased media exposure and traditional medicine's application for World Cultural Heritage," Wang said.

In addition, insiders believe speculation is playing a role. "Stockpiling

and speculation has fueled the price hike," Dou Lianqing, a veteran Tibet-based trader, told Xinhua. "There is a lot of spare and hot money, domestic and worldwide, coming into the herbal market from the real estate market."

Li Youhuan, an economist at the Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences, believes that surplus liquidity is to blame. He wrote in a blog, "There is excess spare money in the economy. That is the engine for increasing the price of herbal medicine."

Housing prices soared in the early months of the year in many cities before the government introduced a series of severe measures to limit speculation. The Chinese art auction market has recently set record prices, and traditional objects such as jade and red tea have also fetched record prices.

"That liquid money has now come into the agriculture and herbal medicine fields," Li said.

The third eye

Traditional Chinese medicine increasingly recognized in US

Though Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) was treated as an illegal entity for decades in the US, it has received increasing recognition in the last 30 years.

But gaining its current status was no simple task, *China Daily* quoted John Scott, president of Golden Flower Chinese Herbs, as saying.

"Back in the 1970s, TCM had no legal status, and most Western doctors were hostile to non-conventional medical practice," Scott said. He and his wife,

Lorena Monda, founded Golden Flower Chinese Herbs in 1990 to produce and distribute Chinese herbal formulae.

The demand for TCM has surged, especially in Chinatowns like San Francisco and New York City. Acupuncture, a TCM practice, has been legalized in 44 states.

Scott said insurance companies pose another major threat to the legitimacy of TCM because a patient cannot make an insurance claim for herbal treatment.

But there is a ray of hope. In July,

the Compound Danshen Dripping Pill, a Chinese herbal treatment for angina and coronary heart disease, successfully completed the FDA's Phase II clinical trials.

Once it passes Phase III investigations, which would most likely happen in 2013, it would be the first-ever Chinese medicine to become a prescription drug in the US.

Though difficult, it is not impossible for Chinese herbs to pass the FDA's drug approval process, Scott said. (Agencies)

Winning young buyers' wallets

Car sale surge shows new shoppers' traits

By Huang Daohen

China's cost-conscious consumers may have many traits that appear curious to the global market. But multinational companies banking on the rise of this group's spending power are seeing their gamble pay off.

Capital runs of car

Beijingers looking to buy a new car are having a hard time finding one.

City auto dealers began reporting a severe shortage of cars last month. The trend is ongoing, with Germany's Volkswagen the scarcest of foreign brands.

"I went to all of Volkswagen's 4S stores in the city but could not find a single car all last week," said Zhang Wei, a local customer.

Zhang, who got his driver's license recently, went Wednesday to the Beijing Yayuncun Auto Market, one of the city's largest auto sellers. Zhang said he decided to buy another brand so he could at least have a car.

Auto dealer Li Xiaodong at the market said delivery time for China-made Polos, Jettas and Magotans is three months; earlier this year, it took one week.

Shortages are being seen in other brands. Sales of Toyota, Honda, Dongfeng Peugeot and Kia exploded last month and local dealers had to borrow cars from dealerships outside of Beijing.

According to the city's traffic bureau, the capital's auto market saw a historical surge last month. As many as 18,000 new cars were sold during the third week, about 2,500 per day.

Li said the surge came after news that the government will begin regulating car purchases next year to ease the traffic pressure. It will also raise the cost of a license plate.

Shanghai is already doing this. The city has a fixed number of new license plates available every month, between 5,000 and 6,000. They are auctioned off, with each priced 40,000 to 50,000 yuan.

Beijing traffic authorities denied plans to limit the issuance of license plates but said they will consider other means to curb the number of cars.

As of late November, there were about 4.67 million cars and 6.20 million people with a driving license in Beijing, according to the Beijing Municipal Traffic Management Bureau.

A matter of face

But not every carmaker can



The auto market in Beijing saw a surge in demand last month after the government announced plans to control car purchases in 2011.
An Xin/CFP Photo

profit from the policy-driven sales surge, said Lillian Lau, market analyst at Accenture Beijing.

Foreign carmakers have a lot to learn about the subtleties of the country's fast-growing market, she said.

Like many car buyers abroad, Chinese consumers considered price, safety and appearance as the three most important factors when shopping for a new car. But the order in which these were considered varied wildly by age, Lau said.

The majority of buyers, those under 30, emphasized appearance and performance. Older buyers focused on safety, comfort and delivery time.

Lau said young buyers are seeking to purchase status. "A good-looking and personalized car will

earn you much face," Lau said.

For riding comfort, Lau said Chinese consumers have a different view from their Western counterparts. Chinese put more importance on internal decoration and riding comfort since most Chinese families only have one car and use it frequently to pick up others.

But in developed countries, where it is common for households to have two or more cars, riding comfort is less emphasized, Lau said.

According to a recent study by the consulting firm Accenture, new car purchases remain an important but expensive decision for most young people. They rarely buy a much cheaper secondhand car, Lau said. "It is a matter of face. Besides, the sec-

ondhand car market is not well developed."

Lau said that's also the reason why young consumers put the least importance on resale value when they purchase their new cars.

Young people always consult dealers, the Internet, family and friends. Most start their search on the Internet before visiting a showroom.

Though such behaviors may seem obvious to shrewd auto managers, Lau said carmakers should keep these purchase patterns in mind when launching new models, especially designing bodies that will appeal to status-seeking buyers.

She also said carmakers should think about how to reach consumers earlier through e-commerce.

Overseas HR firm to tap talents

By Huang Daohen

The increasing growth of the human resource (HR) industry in China has made it a potential goldmine for outsourcers. Swiss staffing giant Adecco announced last Friday that it will expand its business through a joint venture in Shanghai with a local company.

Adecco will hold 49 percent of the joint venture while Beijing Foreign Enterprise Human Resources Service Company (FESCO) will take the remaining 51 percent.

The new venture will start operation next January, with its main focus on providing multinational companies and Chinese clients with staffing and outsourcing services like administration payroll.

This is an important step for Adecco and shows that it sees the China market as part of its long-term strategy, said Adecco chief executive Patrick De Maeseneire.

Adecco has had only a minor presence in China since 1995. According to the company's financial statement, only 6 percent of its third-quarter revenue came from emerging markets like China.

But Maeseneire believes there is immense untapped potential for staffing agencies in a highly populated country like China.

"Pooling our global staffing know-how with a Chinese partner enhances our offering for our multinational client base ... At the same time, we are excited to broaden our Chinese customer base and take advantage of growth within China," he said.

Adecco's shares rose 2.7 percent last week after the announcement.

For a business almost nonexistent two decades ago, HR has turned into a potential goldmine, said analyst Joseph Chan with Standard Chartered Bank in Beijing.

Statistics from Dow Jones show that the country's HR services market was 50.6 billion yuan (\$7.4 billion) last year; it is expected to grow 20 percent annually.

Chan attributed the surge to multinational companies' continued efforts to expand the China market as well as the country's rapid economic development.

As the business environment in China becomes more complex and competitive, overseas companies may use staffing agencies to find talented employees. "This will help enterprises spend less time on administration and more time on strategies and planning," Chan said.

Currently, Chan said almost all large companies use professional HR services. "It's actually like a talent war between foreign and Chinese companies," Chan said.

Other foreign staffing companies are also stepping up to increase their China expansion. US outsourcing company ADP recently acquired a majority stake in ChinaLink, a Shanghai-based HR service provider.

Netherlands-based Randstad Holding NV, the world's second-largest staffing company, said in October that it will increase its China investment because business performance showed solid growth in the third quarter.

Market analyst

Know your consumers

Business can be hard when international companies doing business in China attempt to recycle business models from the West, said Lillian Lau, market analyst at Accenture Beijing.

Lau said one textbook example that market analysts study was the US appliance giant Whirlpool's China venture in 1995.

Whirlpool's executives thought they had an easy inroad because appliances were top-selling prod-

ucts in the country. But three years later, the brand's performance in China was dismal. It occupied only a fraction of the market and had to discontinue its air conditioners and refrigerators.

Despite having excellent technology and shrewd salesmen, Whirlpool was largely ignorant of Chinese behavior, Lau said.

The company attempted to recycle its US marketing methods and company structure.

In the past, Lau said multinational companies underestimated consumers' appetites. "They assumed consumers in less developed countries, like China and India, were fond of cheaper and lower-end products," she said.

The companies who succeed see the people on Beijing's streets as new potential global buyers that follow the consumption patterns of New York City.

Germany's BMW and Mercedes-Benz, stellar performers in the China market, know their clients' appetites. At its automotive center in Beijing, Mercedes-Benz pumped up the glamour of its designs to appeal to young, status-conscious buyers.

Successful international brands, regardless of origin, gauge their clients' needs and tastes to sell the right combination of price, style and comfort, Lau said.

'Dependency disease' a threat to the country's innovation?

By Zhang Dongya

In Chinese it's referred to as *bang-dakuan*; the English equivalent is gold digging. It refers to the phenomenon of young, attractive women trying to marry for money, but in China, this group has taken it further, using their sex to obtain ideal jobs or housing.

The trend has generated concerns that young people are becoming more dependent.

Last week, *China Youth Daily* conducted a survey on the "dependency disease." Out of 3,000 respondents, 57 percent said there were "dependent" people around them, while 11 percent said

there were "many" such people. About 11 percent said there were "not too many," and only 1.6 percent said there were no such people.

Many respondents said the rich-poor gap was the main reason for this tendency.

Forty-three percent of respondents said they hope to realize themselves through someone else's influence, while only 26 percent said they do not expect help from others.

"I thought I could realize myself through my own hard work when I was studying in college, but things changed when I entered the work force," said Liu Lei, who worked in a state-owned com-

pany for two years after graduation. "I work hard but I still cannot afford my housing. People have to rely on parents or their spouse."

Many women, when seeking a partner, have prioritized financial comfort over other qualities, such as appearance or romance.

According to the survey, more than 67 percent said the reason they hope to rely on others is because it's too hard to reach their goals through ability alone.

While 39 percent said gold diggers should be criticized, 27 percent said it is understandable since it was their way to make a living.

Most people agree that dependency is a social disease that will cause problems. More than 70 percent worry it will stimulate corruption; 65 percent think it will lead to an abnormal expansion of social relations; and 40 percent said society will lose creativity and originality.

Relying on parents and friends is a long-time tradition in China, but that's not quite the same when people rely on others in place of using their own creativity and hard work, said Xiao Ying, a professor at Tsinghua University.

He said a society's capability for innovation and development depends on its people's independent spirits.

Comment

Marginalization of the socially vulnerable group

Social relations have played an important role in China, so it is not surprising for people to reach their goals by virtue of social relations. After the social structure changed, there were obvious differences between the elite and ordinary people. Therefore, the latter choose to borrow resources and power from the former to realize themselves. The dependency just reflects the

vulnerable group's disadvantage and feelings of insecurity.

— Jiang Guiping, professor at Hunan Women's University

Dependency leads to weakness

Americans value innovation and personal initiative, but it's certainly true that we place a similar value on personal relationships. The difference is it just might not be as institutional, or as accepted, ethically.

Also, I think it's very difficult to

judge between personal ability and an authority's power. The power of many will always be better than the power of one, so it's sensible. But the tendency to rely on others will mean that eventually no one will rely on his or her own skills, which will leave the country weaker. Having fewer reasons to improve one's own abilities leads to generally lower levels of ability.

— Thomson, American working in Beijing

Harmful to society

At present, it is very common for women to seek a wealthy partner who can provide them a rich life. Also, it is not rare to see some becoming mistresses. From the view of economics, it is a good deal — though they should be criticized morally. Compared with people leaning on moneybags, those who draw support from those with power or authority will generate more problems.

— Liu Honglei, real-estate consultant

Young students tapped to teach safe sex

By Liang Meilan

HIV prevention and safe-sex education took a progressive turn at 49th Middle School in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. Selected students became teachers, as they were asked to pass condoms to family members and educate them on the importance of safe sexual behavior.

These students are "red ribbon" (an international symbol of AIDS awareness) volunteers selected from every grade level from middle school to high school. They were chosen according to their willingness and ability to convey HIV-prevention knowledge to other people.

The campaign, though hailed as innovative, has received plenty of criticism from parents who consider the middle school students too young to understand sex and contraception.

Others say sex education has long been neglected in Chinese education, and that schools like 49th Middle School could even do more.

All middle schools in Beijing have made sex education compulsory.

A draft of a sex education syllabus is in the works and has been implemented on a trial basis in 30 schools. So far there is no nationwide textbook on sex education.

Comment

Sex education a must

As young people mature and become curious about sex, it's necessary to educate them, even as early as in primary school. Since the topic of sex will remain taboo in many conservative Chinese families, schools must fill the void.

— Mi Liangcai, parent

Still too young

As adults, we know much more about AIDS than our children. It is ridiculous for them to tell us how to have safe sex. Middle school students are too young to fully understand sex. Getting access to condoms will definitely mislead them, especially since sex education in China remains underdeveloped.

— Yang Zhi, a parent

Start at five

Five-year-olds should get lessons on the differences between boys and girls and how to get along. Secondary school students should be taught about pregnancy, contraception, HIV and

homosexuality.

— Adam Buxton, UK businessman in Beijing

Nature to know

Children are maturing sexually two or three years earlier than their parents did. The average age for puberty for girls in China is 9.2 years. Some of them experience menarche in fourth grade. Seeing these physical changes, they are eager to know more about sex.

— Du Minlian, professor in department of pediatrics, Chinese Medicine Association

Have a talk first

Though we make condoms accessible in elementary schools, it doesn't mean all kids can get them. If a young child asked for a contraceptive, we'd have a conversation with the student first, not just hand the condom over.

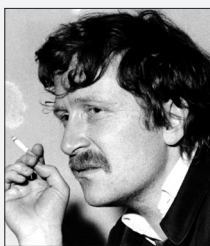
— Beth Singer, superintendent of Provincetown, Massachusetts school district, who passed a condom availability policy for elementary schools



The city's middle schools offer a sex education consulting service but few students take advantage.

Nan Shan/CFP Photo

35 years of crossing cultures



By Li Zhixin

Uwe Krauter was among the first foreigners allowed into China after the country's opening. To commemorate 35 years in the country, Krauter published a memoir, *Cross the Border: 35 years in China*, last month to offer his candid insights into the country and its people.

A leftist during his university days, Krauter was a strong opponent against US military action in Vietnam and marched against Robert McNamara, former US secretary of defense. That demonstration brought him into a clash with police at the European Castle Hotel,

where McNamara was attending a world economic conference — a meeting protesters believed was a cover for a plot by Western powers to further exploit the third world.

Krauter narrowly evaded seeing German prison by seizing an opportunity to work at the Foreign Language Press (FLP) in Beijing in 1974. Since then, his fate has been entwined with China's.

But he never imagined the best years of his life would be spent exclusively in China, a land once regarded as "further away than the moon by Westerners."

Revelation amid tragedy

Four years into his life in Beijing, Krauter received word from his stepfather that his mother had been diagnosed with cancer. He asked him to return to Germany as soon as possible because she was scheduled for a risky surgery.

Krauter became extremely anxious about his mother's condition but he couldn't leave since his German lawyer told him he would be arrested immediately at Frankfurt Airport and taken to prison after seeing his mother.

He was sure his imprisonment would only aggravate his mother's condition, so he decided on a different approach: asking her to visit him in Beijing for further treatment after her surgery.

The decision ended up for the best.

"German doctors said there was no chance of a cure because the cancer had spread all over her body," Krauter said. "But doctors in Beijing Union Medical College Hospital told me that my mother's life could be extended."

During his mother's treatment in Beijing, Krauter learned to accompany her at night and help the nurse take care of her. He also got an intimate look at one of the differences between Chinese and Western culture.

"Unlike Germans, Chinese people never simply leave patients up to the whims of a hospital. Family members expect to learn the details of the disease, its treatments and to take an active role in the loved one's care. It was a new experience for me," he said.

Krauter said Chinese people's attitude toward disease can give his own countrymen valuable insight. "In China, disease is not only a patient's business; it matters to everyone related to the patients. Doctors also treat patients like a family. With the help and encouragement of family, relatives and doctors, patients gain more courage and confidence to overcome the disease," he said. "In Germany, doctors are indifferent toward patients. They just treat patients as malfunctioning machines."

Krauter's mother eventually succumbed to the cancer, but she was surrounded by family and friends when she passed away. His employers held a memorial meeting for her after the death. "Many people from the cultural and art circles came to attend the event," Krauter said. "[At that moment] I felt that love has no boundaries."



Uwe Krauter and Shen Danping got married despite opposition from many people.

Photos provided by Uwe Krauter

Staying forever young in dynamic China

Working at the FLP brought him into contact with Chinese politics and society. He participated in the fourth National People's Congress, translated political documents, went to the countryside and worked alongside peasants, sat in on a Chinese divorce case and witnessed people's trials and tribulations.

Although his life in China was rich and varied, he encountered a big problem when his contract was up, as the FLP declined his application for an extension.

"In the decade following the Cultural Revolution, China was less open and people were uneasy about communicating with foreigners. If foreign employees wanted to meet people from other work units, we had to apply and get permission from our boss," he said.

"My boss considered me a troublemaker because I met too

many people from the literary and art scene on my own."

Krauter was worried that if he left China he would be sent to German prison with no chance to return. "It hurt to think that I couldn't meet my Chinese friends again," he said.

To help Krauter stay in China, several cultural celebrities petitioned the former leader Hu Yaobang, then in charge of foreign publicity work, to persuade Foreign Language Press to extend his contract.

Hu's saving reply came only seven days before he was due to return to Germany.

Krauter found even more trouble through his marriage to Chinese film star Shen Danping in 1984.

"Though Chinese marriage law permitted transnational marriage, it was not accepted in China," he said. "Not only did

Shen's parents oppose the marriage, but both of our units objected. Back then, we had to get approval from our work units to marry," he said.

What's worse, many people fabricated rumors to discredit the couple. "Some said Shen was a woman who wants to emigrate to Germany through marriage; some said I was a cultural spy," Krauter said. "Despite the rumors, Shen still insisted on marrying me. She said, 'There is no law that says a spy can't get married.'"

Rumors were only beginning.

When they married despite the opposition, Krauter's contract was once again left to expire. He faced a series of problems finding a new job, obtaining permission to rent a house and taking care of his pregnant wife.

The couple soon received letters of support from all over the

country when their story was covered by a popular Guangzhou-based film magazine.

Some people offered free room and board while others wrote with offers of work. "There was one letter that came folded around a 10-yuan note. It was written by a university student in Dalian who said he was sorry to hear about our predicament. He decided to send us 10 yuan each month to support us," Krauter said.

Although he experienced many hardships in China, whenever he's asked whether he'll settle back in Germany when he gets told, he replies, "I am only 35 — I have never thought about that."

Krauter is actually 65. "In this dynamic country, I never feel I'm getting old, because I can learn and create new things every day," he said.

Immersed in the city's art

From the late 1970s, Krauter began frequenting the Beijing People's Art Theater, as he has many friends there and is fascinated with Lao She's drama, *Teahouse*.

He watched the play more than 20 times, memorizing it as a window into Qing Dynasty lifestyles. "The philosophy of life expressed in the drama always makes me observe myself," he said.

Krauter and a friend translated the drama into German during their spare time and contacted the Mannheim National

Theater in Germany about an invitational tour in 1980.

The play was a hit across Europe, being staged more than 50 times in 14 German cities and afterward in France and Switzerland.

This was the first time a Chinese modern drama was shown in Europe. "At the beginning, I was worried that Europeans couldn't appreciate Chinese drama and understand the thought it expresses, but the thunderous and prolonged applause told me that European audiences reso-

nated strongly with the story and actors," he said.

"We all share the human experience: the suffering that war, turmoil, violence and ignorance brings is the same to all of us."

In 35 years, Krauter has worn many hats in China: German specialist, actor, documentary producer, interpreter and company boss. He loves the identity of documentary producer most, as it was the role that most allowed him to bridge Chinese and Western culture.

He is now preparing a doc-

umentary that looks at cultural relics that Westerners took from Dunhuang, Gansu Province at the beginning of the 20th century.

"Many precious Chinese cultural relics are scattered across Western Europe, with the highest concentration in the UK," he said.

"In the British Museum, only 3 percent of the stolen Chinese relics are open to viewing by the public. The rest remain hidden. If they don't have the space to show them, then why not let them go back to their original owners?" he said.

Maldives ambassador's pingpong diplomacy

By Chu Meng

The head coach of the Maldives national pingpong team and team leader of the Maldives delegation at the Asian Games in Guangzhou, Ahmed Latheef, came last month to play pingpong in Beijing.

"Though Maldives pingpong players failed to win any medals in the Guangzhou Asian Games, their improvement is remarkable compared to my own performance in the Beijing Asian Games 20 years ago," said Latheef, 54, who also was the first ambassador of Maldives in China.

Pingpong is a big part of Latheef's life in Beijing. When he's not traveling on weekends for work, he goes to community parks, such as Tuanjiehu Park and Shichahai Park, to play.

"Nobody recognizes me as an official. Few can beat me," the ambassador said with a laugh.

Latheef is also famous among diplomat circles in China because he has won the annual diplomats pingpong tournament for three straight years. The event draws more than 100 diplomats from about 50 countries. It was at a tournament that Latheef befriended Deng Yaping, a former Chinese pingpong champion and Olympic gold medalist.

Before beginning his diplo-

matic career, Latheef was a professional player and coach for the Maldives national pingpong team for 12 years. "A person like me, not tall, a small figure, no fat but muscles, is particularly suitable for this game," the ambassador joked.

He retired from the national team at 25 and trained to begin his Foreign Service career and started as an assistant in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1981.

"I found I was born to work with people from other countries because I had rich experiences with people from around the world," Latheef said. "And at work, I always reacted faster than others."

He completed Foreign Service training in India in 1982 and further training in Berlin in 1989. When he worked as the deputy high commissioner of Maldives in India from 2004 to 2007, he played a significant and pioneering role in setting up the first resident mission in India and contributed greatly to consolidating the close relationship between India and the Maldives.

Leaving India, he directly assumed duties as the first ambassador of Maldives in China in August 2007. At the same time, he also served as the Head of Mission, with the rank of minister counselor, of the newly estab-



The ambassador played pingpong with Deng Yaping at a diplomats tournament.

Photo provided by Ahmed Latheef

lished Embassy of Maldives.

"My first trip to Beijing was in 1990 to participate in the Asian Games. My second trip was for assisting my country in participating in the 2008 Olympic Games. Between the two trips, China made tremendous progress, I think, in all respects," Latheef said.

He said China is increasingly playing a more important role on the world stage. The highlight of its coming of age was the Olympics, which showed the world that China has arrived on the international scene.

More can be done to help China's disabled

By Han Manman

Limited access to quality service, discrimination and lack of a barrier-free environment are the top three obstacles China's disabled people face, an official from Handicap International (HI) in China said.

Although the country has made great efforts to raise disabled people's living standards, more should be done if China wants to compare favorably with developed countries, said Jean Van Wetter, director of HI China, at an International Day of Persons with Disabilities event jointly hosted by HI and the Belgium Embassy last Friday.

China has about 83 million disabled people, accounting for 6.3 percent of the country's population, and the number could exceed 100 million within five years, said Chen Gong, who is affiliated with a research institute at Peking University.

"Those with disabilities and their families account for more than 20 percent of China's population," Chen said. "Ensuring their well-being is critical to China's social and economic development."

Chen said living standards for people with disabilities in China have improved over the past year due to the government's sustained efforts.

A report from the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) last week showed the annual disposable per capita income of urban residents with disabilities increased by 9.2 percent. The figure for rural residents with disabilities rose 16.6 percent. Last year also saw an increase in the average housing area and a reduction of registered unemployment rates for those with disabilities.

The most significant increase was the proportion of urban persons with disabilities receiving medical insurance, which increased more than 12 percent compared with 2009, the report said.

"Although China's govern-

ment has made significant efforts to improve the social standing of physically challenged people, a large percentage of them, especially in rural areas, still don't have access to many of the services they need," Wetter said.

He said access to quality services such as rehabilitation, education and vocational training either do not exist in rural areas or are too poor in quality or too expensive.

Wetter said the country also lacks a barrier-free environment, which means access is a problem for those with impairments.

"Beijing significantly improved its accessibility for the Paralympics and is doing well compared to many other cities in the world. Improving accessibility and making a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities is, however, not only a question of infrastructure. You still rarely see persons in a wheelchair or blind persons alone in the street," he said.

"More efforts should be made to encourage persons with disabilities to use the facilities and for the population in general to respect the facilities. Most of the sidewalks are blocked with cars that are illegally parked that prevent persons in wheelchairs or persons with vision impairments to access the facilities."

Wetter said the third important step to improving disabled people's living standards is to reduce discrimination.

"People with disabilities are still seen in many areas as 'objects of charity' instead of persons who contribute to the development of the country. A shift in approach toward people with disabilities is necessary so that they feel empowered," he said.

"The most important thing is to change the perception that many people have of persons with disabilities. The way we view and define disability significantly impacts the lives of people with disabilities and their families."

Award-winning Italian films shown in Beijing film festival



Aureliano Amadei, director of 20 Cigarettes, works with the lead actor.

Photo by Ponzio Pirata

By Chu Meng

The second session of Great Italian Films Exhibition, "From Venice to Beijing," held by the Italian Institute of Culture in Beijing and Venice Biennale, began yesterday at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts.

The 10-day film exhibition began with two films that won awards at the 67 Venice Film Festival in September: *Malavoglia* by Pasquale Scimeca and *20 Cigarettes* by Aureliano Amadei.

Marco Muller, artistic director of the Venice Film Festival, and Enrico Magrelli, director of the National Film Archive of Italy, will lead lectures and debates at Beijing Film Academy and Tongji University in Shanghai next week.

"Such international cultural projects held by Italian embassies around the world in recent years have greatly promoted and spread Italian films and culture into the world. It has helped smooth away cultural obstacles set by language and customs," said Barbara Alighiero, the culture counselor at the Italian embassy in Beijing.

Amadei, director of *20 Cigarettes*, was considered a wizard coming out of the Venice Film Festival. His film, based on his experiences during the Iraq War, attracted lots of controversy.

"A movie can bring out something more powerful than news reports can - an emotional truth," Amadei said. The director said his film reveals aspects of the war that have gone previously unnoticed.

He also said he was lucky to have won the competition on his first try.

Mueller, a famous producer who once knelt in front of Chinese film star Zhang Ziyi at the Venice Film Festival, has tried bringing Chinese films to European audiences.

"The fact is that there is an event called 'From Venice to Beijing' should mean efforts are being made in the other direction as well. This is very important," Amadei said.

He added that like Chinese films, Italian films often battle against stereotypes. When films manage to break out of their predictable modes, then they have no nationality. They then belong to the whole of humanity.

Foreign volunteers observe International Volunteer Day

By Chu Meng

Thirty foreign volunteers working in communities in China observed the 24th International Volunteer Day on December 5 with a festival, the first of its kind in Beijing.

The celebration was organized by the Beijing International Volunteer Association (BIVA) under the UN's Volunteer Organization and the Beijing Cultural Volunteer Center.

International Volunteer Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1985 and is celebrated to recognize the contribution of volunteers worldwide. Since the 1970s, more than 20,000 international volunteers have worked in developing countries, often bearing tough conditions, according to its official website.

During the past five years, about 2,200 foreign volunteers every year have been involved in social improvement, cultural education and technical assistance projects in Chinese communities, said Wu Haibin, Secretary-General of BIVA.

"Through their achievements and local involvement, we see how volunteers today, regardless of nationality, are dedicating themselves to improving communities on a larger scale," said Pablo Barrera, UN coordination



International volunteers from South Africa, the Netherlands and South Korea performing Peking Opera at the ceremony.
Photo provided by Wu Haiqing

specialist in China.

Susie Jolly, a 38-year-old Australian scholar in Peking University's School of Human Resources, was one of the representatives at the ceremony. She came to Beijing in the fall of 2009 and registered as a BIVA international volunteer just a week after arriving.

"My supervisor, a woman in her 50s, was already a registered member at that time. From her I got to know there were channels and organizations to continue my volunteering work in

Beijing," Jolly said.

She started with teaching English for migrant primary school students in the outskirts of the city and for the elderly in Wu-dao-kou.

"Foreign volunteers were extremely welcomed and received the same treatment as locals," Jolly said.

As a veteran volunteer, BIVA recommended her for work at the Shanghai Expo's Australian Pavilion, the Beijing Marathon that was held on October 24 and the Asian Games in Guangzhou.

She is now working in the National Center for the Performing Arts as an education assistant for a variety of weekend programs aimed at teenagers. "I love music and love speaking with Chinese kids. I have successfully gotten a lot of Australians in Beijing to join these programs," Jolly said.

Besides working in the big cities, more foreigners volunteered to help out at the sites of natural disasters this year, such as after the Yushu County earthquake, Wu said.

Christmas brunch brings warmth to the elderly poor

By Liang Meilan

Part of the Christmas spirit is about sharing with people outside your personal circle of family and friends.

Leslie Simpson, founder of Beijing's first charity distribution store, Roundabout Charity Store, embodied that spirit on December 5 when she organized a Christmas buffet brunch fundraiser.

The event generated 5,675 yuan, which will be donated to a community of elderly people living in Hebei Province who have no family to look after them. Much of the money will be used to buy new quilts and thermals.

Sponsors include Michael's Pizza, Coldstone Creamery, Mac Crafts, Claire's Music Studio and artist Iona Jackson.

"It was wonderful to see so many local businesses come together to help make a difference for those in need," Simpson said.

Simpson came up with the idea to have a charity brunch when she realized that traditional methods of fundraising – simply asking people to donate – had their limitations.

Simpson's brunch included entertainment for kids, including a bouncy ball castle, at no extra charge.

"We put sheets with information about the elderly people we would be helping on the



The elderly in Hebei Province receive quilts bought with donations from the Christmas charity brunch.
Photos provided by Leslie Simpson

tables," Simpson said. "If a customer wanted to purchase an item for a specific person, they could bring the sheet to the desk and make a donation."

Warm quilts cost 110 yuan and thermal underwear 65 yuan; a scarf, hat or gloves cost 25 yuan each.

Half the proceeds from each

brunch ticket was donated to the community.

"I was thrilled to find that people were very, very generous," Simpson said.

Pat Christie, an attendee, said that Simpson's charity store makes it easy for people to participate in charitable causes.

"This event is just another



Leslie Simpson (left), founder of Roundabout Charity Store

wonderful example of that. The food was delicious and we felt privileged to be able to help the people in the photographs on our table," Christie said.

Roundabout has been sending food and clothing to the area over the last two years, as well as paying for several of the elderly people to live in retirement homes.

Opened in October 2008, Roundabout has collected about 20 truckloads of donations from individuals and organizations for underprivileged communities in Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Qinghai, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Tibet, Yunnan, Sichuan and Chongqing.

It also links charity organizations and possible donors like international schools, embassies and social groups.

Those interested in becoming volunteers or donating, please contact Simpson at thecharitystore@gmail.com.

Event

Marriage success seminar

What's the meaning of marriage? This seminar, led by Stephannie Tebow, a professional marriage counselor, will discuss topics like how to develop communication strategies in marriage and how to end unnecessary arguments. The seminar is organized by Agape Counseling and Training Center, a counseling agency that deals with life problems such as cross-cultural adjustment, parenting and job hunting.

Where: Lufthansa Center, Room 1325, Golden Land Building, 32 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 11, 9 am – 5 pm

Tel: 6467 2362

Cost: 150 yuan for bilingual session, 300 yuan for English session

Charity Christmas Pageant

The Congregation of the Good Shepherd (COGS), a community of expat Christians, is staging a children's pageant to celebrate Christmas. Christmas stories will be performed by kids and shown to audiences together with carols. Another part of the event is to collect gifts for the Seven Color Migrant School. This program requires participants to bring their drawing tools, small toys, warm scarves, small treats for children or rice and oil for school lunches. All materials will be used to fill 88 bags for children ages 4 and 5 in that school. In accordance with Chinese law, only foreign passport holders are allowed to attend meetings held by COGS.

Where: COGS, 3/F Meeting Room, Capital Mansion Athletic Club, 6 Xinyuan NanLu, Chaoyang District

When: December 12, 10 am – 11 am

Tel: 6430 1600

Cost: Free

Winter wonderland charity fair

This is the second annual Christmas fair for kids and parents at the Legend Garden Campus. Attendees can experience making their own cards in a card-making workshop. A movie will be shown at Edward Allyn Theater. The Senior School Choir will perform Christmas songs live. Items ranging from Christmas ornaments to tea and books will be on sale. A raffle and silent auction will also be held. All the proceeds will go to PNG group, a student-run charity raising funds for the poor in Papua New Guinea.

Where: Dulwich College Beijing, Legend Garden Campus, 89 Shoudujichang Lu, Shunyi District

When: December 12, 10 am – 4 pm

Tel: 6454 9000

Cost: Free

(By Liang Meilan)

Get a little 'paintertainment'

By Liang Meilan

When it comes to art, everyone has a personal reservoir of creativity waiting to be tapped. That's the belief of Beijing Color Studio, which is holding an "art jam" to help people express their inner creativity.

Beijing Color Studio, a painting workshop for kids and adults, successfully conducted an art jam for adults last month, and now they'd like to take the concept further.

An art jam works like this: works of art are placed throughout a 200-square-meter room, and people are invited to walk through, letting down their guard and getting immersed in art.

The atmosphere is augmented with chill-out music and soft lighting, which helps stir people's imaginations.

"I'd say this wonderful experience is in some ways similar to entertainment, but better," said Wang Mingming, who attended the first art jam.

Karen Patterson, the studio's owner, offers other themed events for people who need a venue to paint or draw. She often holds activities for children, and the studio can also organize art-themed parties for families or companies.

The venue's professional lighting equipment and backdrop make it an ideal place for professional and amateur photographers to rent on an hourly basis.

A full range of painting related classes and events for adults and kids, with prior painting experience or not, are provided.



CFP Photos



Painting can exercise children's creativity.

How to use acrylics

This course, taught by fine arts teacher Nina Griffie from Bristol, England, will show people with some drawing experience how to use acrylics in both conventional and nonconventional ways.

When: Mondays, 12:30-3 pm, 7:30-9:30 pm

Cost: 90 yuan per session

Evening oil painting class

Designed for beginners to oil painting. Basic oil painting skills like color mixing, shadowing, highlighting and composition will be taught.

When: Wednesdays, 7:30-9:30 pm

Cost: 180 yuan per session

Drawing for beginners

This course will be about lines, texture, curves, tone, perspective, foreshortening, pencils gradients and other basic skills of pencil and charcoal drawing.

When: Thursdays and Fridays, 9:30 am - noon

Cost: 1,800 yuan for eight weeks

Life drawing

A human figure-painting course for people of all skill levels. Concepts of shadowing, texture and color are studied in a variety of media.

When: Wednesdays, 7:30-9:30 pm

Cost: 60 yuan per session

Multimedia art course

Children ages 6 to 9 are asked to use a wide range of media such as acrylic, pencil, ink and charcoal, to generate their own works during an eight-week course aimed at tapping into their artistic abilities.

When: Saturdays, noon - 2:30 pm

Cost: 2,400 yuan for eight weeks

Technical art skills course

The course is for kids 9 to 14 years old.

When: Saturday, 3-5:30 pm

Cost: 2,400 yuan for eight weeks

Beijing Color Studio

Where: 2 Dongwuhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 13671295154

Website:

beijingcolorstudio.com

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

My expat friend informed me that it's been very crowded at the Entry and Exit Bureau recently. I have some paperwork I need to fill out at the office but I don't want to queue for two hours. Are there any other solutions?

As Christmas and New Year's approaches, many are preparing to travel abroad, so this month is peak season for the office, especially branches in Chaoyang, Dongcheng, Xicheng and Haidian districts. According to a PSB report, 9,535 people went to entry-and-exit offices on November 27 alone. To avoid the crowd, consider going to the offices in Daxing, Shunyi, Tongzhou or Changping. And don't go on weekends.

I'm a museum enthusiast and I'm planning to visit all the interesting museums in town. Do you know if there is a universal ticket that covers all the museums?

Actually, one was just released on Monday. The ticket can be used to enter 65 of the city's museums, aquariums and zoos. It costs 80 yuan, which would save you 1,900 yuan if you visited all the places it covers. The ticket is now available at every post office. Or you can book it by calling the hotline 6221 3256. To check the museum list, visit bowuguan.com.cn.

I'm an overseas student in town just for one month. I find many of my classmates who come from other countries have a common problem finding an English church of their denomination. Could you provide a list for us?

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (South Cathedral) for Catholics

Where: 141, Qianmen Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

Schedule: Worship begins 10:30 am and 4 pm on Sundays;

It celebrates Mass in English twice on Sundays and in Latin at 6 am every day.

Chongwenmen Church for Methodists

Where: 2 Hougou Hutong, Chongwenmen Nei Dajie, Xicheng District

Schedule: Worship begins at 8 am, 10:30 am and 7 pm on Sundays.

It holds sermons in Korean at 1:30 pm on Sundays

Congregation of the Good Shepherd (COGS)

Where: 3/F Meeting Room, Capital Mansion Athletic Club, 6 Xinyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Schedule: Worship every Sunday at 10 am

Only foreign passport holders are allowed to attend meetings in COGS.

(By Liang Meilan)

Chaoyang to recruit foreign volunteers

By Zhao Hongyi

Chaoyang District is recruiting expat volunteers working and living in the district for regular duties as part of wider efforts to establish an international volunteer service base.

The Chaoyang Civilization Office, an arm of the district government, set its target size for the volunteer group at 8 percent of the district's 3.85 million people. It set up Chaoyang Volunteer Union, a special affiliate that receives applications, organizes events and trains newcomers. The union has application forms, demands and projects on its website.

Chaoyang District includes the central business district (CBD), where many multinational corporations are based, and much of the diplomatic community, which includes more than 200



Local communities welcome foreign volunteers to get involved.

CFP Photo

embassies, international and non-government organizations.

The district has registered 320,000 volunteers so far, which is 8.3 percent of the total population. The number of volunteers is 20 percent of the population when temporary volunteers are counted,

said Wang Qian, project manager.

The vast majority of these volunteers are locals, however.

"We have nearly 1,000 registered foreign volunteers at present," Wang said. "We welcome more foreigners to participate in our program."

Currently, most of the foreign volunteers organize and coordinate international conferences and events, and lead activities like tree-planting and garbage sorting.

"We'd like to invite foreign volunteers to introduce new ideas and ways of doing volunteer work, and educate local volunteers," Wang said.

The office would also like more local volunteers who are able to do international public relations. Foreign volunteers can be of great help in this field, Wang said.

Chaoyang Civilization Office

Contact: Wang Qian

Tel: 6509 9464

Fax: 6509 9476

Website: www.bjcywm.gov.cn

Chaoyang Volunteer Union

Tel: 8771 6405

Fax: 8777 1428

Website: www.cyvu.org.cn

Vanishing wo

Ning Ying's Beijing Trilogy captures a changing city



Ning Ying

“Bertolucci told me every inch of the screen could not be used haphazardly. As the director, you have to design every detail. I remember his words when I made my film.”

“Film offers compelling advantages as a capsule of history – even more than literature, painting and music. While I did not make many films in the past 20 years, I’m proud that I created something with cultural and historical significance.”

By He Jianwei

Films make a city.

Rome was celebrated by *Roman Holiday*, Barcelona by *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* and Paris by *Paris, I Love You*.

But just try to name a film that really captures Beijing.

While Ning Ying has not been a prolific filmmaker during her 24-year career, she has shown an amazing ability to dig out and expose the soul of a city. Her “Beijing Trilogy,” filmed throughout and finished in the 1990s, offers a visual record of the capital’s transformation.

“This was reality: now it’s dying,” Ning said after the conclusion of her screening last week at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art.

The film was her attempt to capture the mentality of Beijing life before it was discovered by the world.

Ning was born in Beijing in 1958. Despite dreams of being a violinist, she chose to attend Beijing Film Academy in 1978 to study sound recording with filmmakers like Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou.

In the 1980s, she continued her studies in directing at Rome’s Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, where she met Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci and became Bertolucci’s assistant for *The Last Emperor* in 1987.

When her studies ended, she returned to China and worked at Beijing Film Studio, where she made her debut film – a commercially successful comedy.

But commercial film was never her goal.

“I had big ambitions for my career. I wanted to make a film for the city that I grew up and that would serve as a historical record for later generations,” she said.

The opportunity came in the 1990s, when Beijing began to truly “function like a city.”

“Like everyone else in my generation, I grew up in a courtyard. The hospital, shop and market were nearby. I walked less than 5 minutes to go to school. Millions of these courtyards made up the downtown area, and anything outside that was in the suburbs,” she said.

The courtyard was her circle and she seldom ventured out to other places. But urban culture was turning that simple lifestyle on its head.

“I cared about reality, but I saw what I knew as reality was evaporating so fast. I thought that putting it into my films would be a way to capture the true spirit, like taking a photograph of someone before they go through radical plastic surgery,” she said.

Beijing Trilogy begins with a loving but unsentimental story about people being forced into obsolescence – a portrait of ordinary urbanites caught in the winds of social change.

Adapted from Chen Jiangong’s novel, the 1993 film *For Fun* depicts the life of a retiree named Old Han. As the gatekeeper of a Peking Opera theater, Han struggles to adapt to a life of retirement. He ambles along streets and finds a group of amateur opera performers in a street park, and with them decides to set up a troupe.

“Bertolucci told me every inch of the screen could not be used haphazardly. As the director, you have to design every detail,” Ning said. “I remember his words when I made my film.”

For Fun opens with a full length shot of street scene, accompanied by bits of a Kurt Weill song in the background. “In cinematic theory, background music should be significant to the plot. My music was simply a reflection of what was heard in Beijing at the time,” she said.

There was an obsession with classical music in the early 1990s. Most shops and bookstores played classical music. In preparing for the film, she devoted a lot of time to rediscovering the city she had left for several years, and how it was surviving its economic transition.

Ning’s film explored how people dealt with these painful changes when the old system was smashed but the new one had yet to be pulled together.

The second film of the trilogy, *On the Beat*, released in 1995, followed the life of neighborhood police.

She lived with the officers for half a year in 1994 to learn how they went about resolving disputes, but gained little material to use in her film until one officer told her the story of how they had beaten a rabid dog several years earlier.

The film opens with a long shot at one officer teacher a new recruit about their job as they bike through the streets and alleys. “Being a cop means dealing with trivial things,” he said.

“I scouted all the hutong inside Second Ring Road and picked several typical ones as possible filming locations,” she said.

In the scene where they beat the dog, the police run from Dongcheng to Xicheng, through homes, abandoned courtyards and demolished ruins. “My actors complained that it was not true to reality, but I told them it was just a story, and I wanted to show how different hutong and courtyards looked,” she said.

After beating the dog, which bit several residents, they were given a new assignment to stop residents from raising dogs.

And so the conflicts began. People hid their pets and neighbors rattled them out to the police. There were many quarrels with the officers. “The police were direct and cruel, and obviously had no experience with higher education. They look like street thugs as they interrogate the suspects,” she said.

“According to one theory, the interrogator must look like even more of a criminal than the suspect. One police school in the US treated my presentation of this like a textbook.”

The final chapter of her trilogy, *I Love Beijing*, was released in 2000. The film follows a taxi driver and his passengers who are attempting to adjust to the fast-changing pace of contemporary China.

The yellow cab acts as a microcosm of the urban scene that has become alien to the driver. The world has changed, and women only love men with cars and houses.

“Compared with the first 10 years of this century, the last 10 years changed slowly,” she said.

“Film offers compelling advantages as a capsule of history – even more than literature, painting and music,” Ning said. “While I did not make many films in the past 20 years, I’m proud that I created something with cultural and historical significance.”

1. *On the Beat* depicts the life of neighborhood police.

2. *I Love Beijing* follows a taxi driver and his passengers, attempting to adjust to the fast-changing society.

3. *For Fun* is a loving but unsentimental story about people being forced into obsolescence.

Photos provided by UCCA and Goethe-Institut



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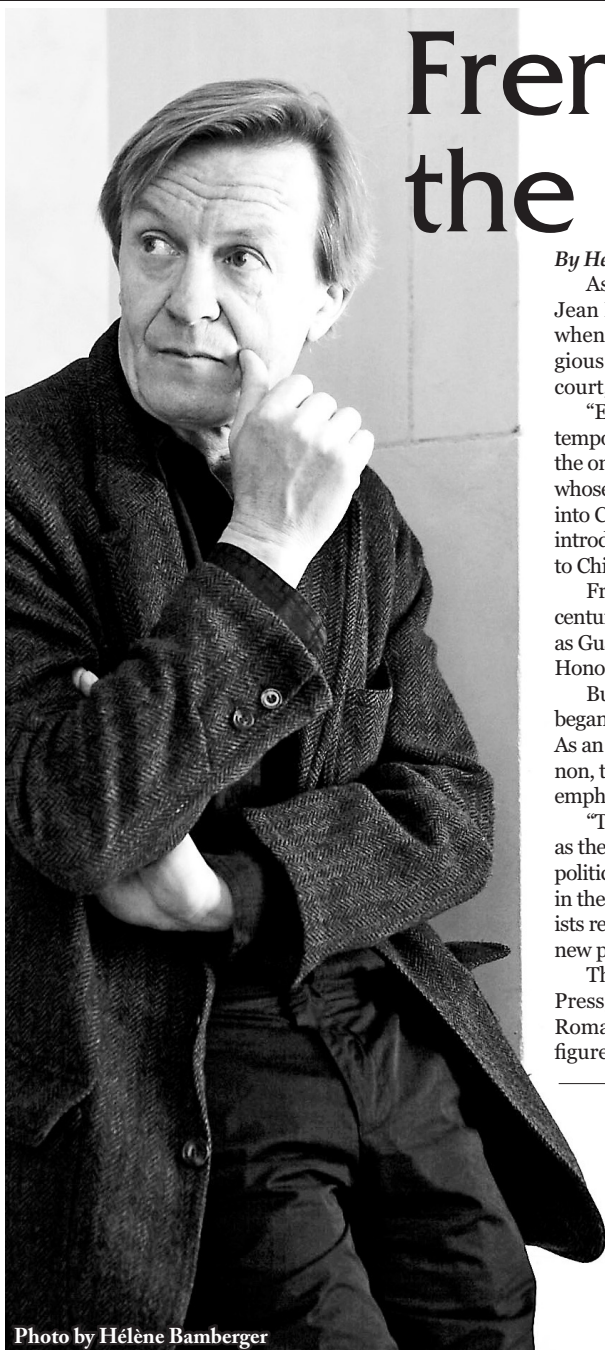


Photo by Hélène Bamberger

French writer revitalizes the novel

By He Jianwei

As a Post-Nouveau Roman writer, Jean Echenoz revitalized the novel when he won France's most prestigious literary prize, the Prix Goncourt, in 1999.

"Echenoz opens the door to contemporary French novels for us. He is the only contemporary French novelist whose novels have all been translated into Chinese," said Chen Tong, who introduced Nouveau Roman literature to China in the 1990s.

French novels peaked in the 19th century under the pens of masters such as Gustave Flaubert, Victor Hugo and Honoré de Balzac.

But the classical literary genre began to wane after World War II. As an avant-garde literary phenomenon, the Nouveau Roman (new novel) emphasizes fictional form over content.

"The novel was not as important as theoretical books about philosophy, politics, linguistics and psychoanalysis in the 1960s and 1970s, so new novelists realized they had a mission to find a new path for the form," Echenoz said.

The Editions de Minuit (Midnight Press) is a bastion of Nouveau Roman, publishing books by leading figures such as Alain Robbe-Grillet,

Nathalie Sarraute, Marguerite Duras and Robert Pinget.

At 30, Echenoz saw the publication of his first book. Many publishers had already rejected his manuscript. That 1979 work, *The Greenwich Meridian*, was an experiment with the abstract constructions of Nouveau Roman.

Publisher Jerome Lindon offered Echenoz within an hour of their first meeting in his office. "I bought a stiff piece of cardboard on the way home to the suburbs to wrap the document," Echenoz said.

After his first novel, Echenoz became a star in French literature. Although all of his books are published by Lindon's press, he denies belonging to the generation of Nouveau Roman writers.

"They went too far in experimenting with the style of the novel, rejecting many of the established features and regarding earlier novelists as old-fashioned in plot, narrative, ideas and character," he said.

Echenoz draws on popular fiction like detective stories, science fiction and comic strips to create a narrative that is humorous, entertaining and full of adventure.

His second novel, *Cherokee*, also plays on the conventions of the detective novel; in *Double Jeopardy*, he takes on the adventure novel; and *Chopin's Move* borrows from the espionage novel.

"I just want to explore the possibility for novels in today's literature. I show respect for different styles of novels in my books, but that is part of my effort to rebuild the position of 'serious' literature from the popular styles," he said.

One of the characteristics of Echenoz's style is that he always keeps a distance between the writer and the characters. "Writing is like taking a picture. There is distance between your eyes and the objects," he said.

When he won the Prix Goncourt for *I'm Gone*, telling the fortune of an art gallery owner fallen on difficult times, Echenoz found new readers both at home and abroad.

"Echenoz plays with time, characters and plots that all work simultaneously," Xu Xing, a writer, said. "When I read his novels, I feel like I am walking into a gallery. Each paragraph is like an oil painting, and all the paintings are arranged according to his logic."

Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of international art, design and architecture books.

Jock Sturges: Life Time

By Jock Sturges, 192pp, Steidl International Photography, 578 yuan

This book presents a range of color work for the first time and carries forward Sturges' extended portraits of families in Northern Californian counter-culture communities and on French naturist beaches.

Karl Lagerfeld: Metamorphoses of an American

By Karl Lagerfeld, 1,144pp, Steidl, 540 yuan

In this book, Lagerfeld documents the physical and emotional development of top male model Brad Kroenig. Since the time of this first Lagerfeld photo

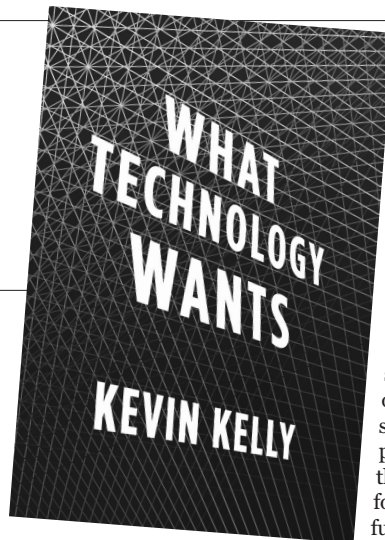
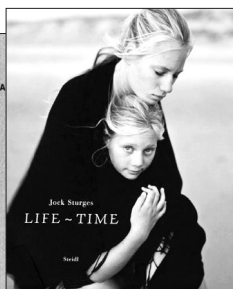
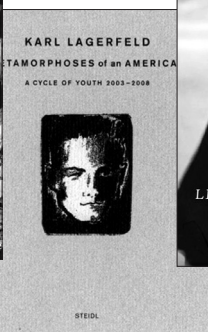
shoot, Kroenig has been featured in almost every major designer's advertising campaign and/or fashion show, including Lagerfeld, Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Justin Cavalli, Perry Ellis and Fendi.

The Golden Age of Spain: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture

By Joan Sureda, 304pp, Vendome Press, 525 yuan

Following Columbus' discovery of the New World in 1492, Spain entered an era of unprecedented power and influence as explorers and conquistadors plundered the riches of the New World. For nearly 200 years, the combination of gold and fervent Christianity had a profound effect on art, as wealthy patrons commissioned both lavish portraits and inspirational works.

(By He Jianwei)



What Technology Wants
By Kevin Kelly, 416pp, Viking Adult, \$27.95

By Liang Meilan

Marshall MacLuhan's idea that "media is an extension of the human body" has inspired generations of researchers into the nature of technology.

Among them is Kevin Kelly, the top technology prophet and founder of *Wired* magazine. *What Technology Wants*, his new book, expands on this evolutionary interpretation using the internal logic of "technium," a word Kelly coins to describe the greater, global network of technology vibrating around mankind.

Kelly says that as water "wants" to flow downhill and life tends to fill available ecological niches, technology similarly "wants" to expand and evolve.

"We have no choice but to embrace it, because we are already symbiotic with it; technology underpins civilization," he says.

He goes a step further than MacLuhan, saying technology is

Tech maven talks about future in new book

an extension of human lives.

Unlike the prevailing opinion that technology is neutral, the book takes the stance that technology, developing in an evolutionary logic as similar to nature, has immense positive potential to increase the options and opportunities for people and to solve past and future problems.

Kelly encourages people to listen to what technology wants and follow its internal logic to be better prepared for the new technologies to come.

As a long-term observer of the Internet, Kelly devotes a large portion of the book to talking about its future trends.

He says the first two stages of the Internet linked computers and then webpages together: today we have entered a third stage, where the Internet now links information.

One feature of this stage is social media, a transition from static Internet webpages to real-time data flowing out from Twitter and Facebook.

Kelly predicts a new era will come where lives will become the information of the Internet.

"The linked information will form a pool recording all the things we do as the basis of our lives. The ocean of this recorded information will become our environment," he says.

He says gadgets like cameras and recorders are sensors of human activities. They can see what we look like; they can hear what we talk about. These sen-

social "clouds" of sound, speech and movement are what make such a pool possible.

The concept of the pool is very close to that of cloud computing, which separates data storage from physical media that we can touch and hold.

"We are actually already inside the pool. The information in the pool includes not just files, but our entire actions. It is a totality of our digital lives," he says.

One day, with a large enough pool, Kelly says it will be possible to predict where a person will go the next day and prepare personalized services such as hotel reservations; Amazon's book recommendations taken to their ultimate extreme.

And this will force a change in the way the world regards economics. In a world where information is everywhere, information is a tough commodity to sell. Kelly predicts the Internet will become profitable as a service to provide customers with experiences based on information rather than information itself.

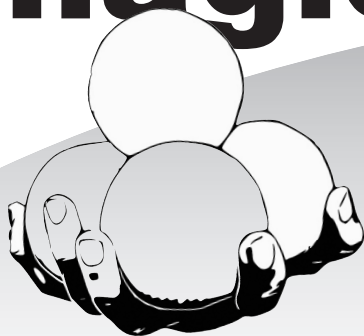
"Being an information spreader generates little profit. The breakthrough will be adding value to the information," he says.

Speaking to 20 Chinese Internet researchers users at Renmin University last Sunday, Kelly said his next book will be about how the digital world affects the real world, and how Web businesses are evolving to the rhythm of technology.

The man with the magic ball

15

Trend



By Wang Yu

Having a niche interest is bittersweet. While the exclusivity may seem cool, it can be heartbreaking trying to bring your interest to the general public – all the more so when only four people in the country share that interest.

Enter Jiuji, the contact juggler.

As one of the first crystal ball trick artists in China, Jiuji has seen the scene grow from essentially zero people to its current popularity, where it allows him to scrape out a living performing in shopping malls and at shows.

But there is a long road ahead before Jiuji can build his dream circus.



First crystal ball

To see contact juggling is magical.

In one of Jiuji's online videos, he dances wildly as the crystal ball in his hand remains seemingly "fixed" in the air in front of him. In other portions, the ball alone moves along his body – stopping wherever he tells it to.

It has been a four-year journey for Jiuji to so impress his viewers.

In 2006, when Jiuji was still a tattooist in Qingdao, he was introduced to contact juggling by a neighbor who showed him a video online. He was immediately taken with the performance, but had no way to learn more.

That changed when he went to Yunnan Province to work in another tattoo parlor. While tattooing, he met a Japanese artist who was playing a crystal ball while waiting in a chair. That was the man who taught him the phrase "contact juggling."

"When I moved back to Qingdao, I couldn't stop thinking about what I had seen the Japanese artist do. I moved back to Yunnan to

find him, but when he wasn't there I decided to create my own lessons," Jiuji says.

In 2006 there were no teachers or textbooks about contact juggling in China. Jiuji purchased his first ball over eBay and learned from videos on YouTube, then

available in the country. It usually took him a month to master one trick.

When a friend returned from abroad, he brought Jiuji a new guidebook that offered a wealth of knowledge and tips. Armed with his new skills, Jiuji took to the streets.

Contact juggling takes time and commitment to master, and time he had in Yunnan.

In 2006, there were only four contact jugglers in China: Jiuji, a former professional dancer in the northeast and two magicians in Guangzhou and Shenzhen.



A chance to take

After studying two years and gaining confidence, Jiuji boarded a plane for Beijing to seek new opportunities. Using the Internet, he was able to find Federico Moro, an experienced contact juggler and the French co-founder of fixed gear bike and juggling shop at Wu-daoying Hutong.

"We got in touch through email and the first thing I did when I moved here was visit him. However, it was in December and he had gone back to France for Christmas. When he came back, I got involved in the local scene," Jiuji says.

Moro is a senior artist who has been performing for nine years. The shop hosts a weekly event every Monday where master artists from around the world come to perform and teach.

Jiuji has used their training to start performing at local scene hotspots like The Place and Houhai.

"Performing in front of others and on the street really helps you to improve. I think the most important thing in contact juggling is to find your own style. Single ball tricks can be fused with dance, drama and magic. Most European masters like to perform difficult tricks, but Asian audiences are more interested in the visual effects of the whole performance," Jiuji says.

Whether it's at a shopping mall or music festival, contact juggling performances tend to draw eyes. Videos of his performances spread quickly online, opening opportunities for commercial shows and money.

Building a platform

Crystal balls for contact juggling have become one of the top search terms on Taobao. Many young people, especially high school students, are getting into the scene.

However, only balls in the price range of 180 yuan can be used for all the tricks. The right balance of materials and weight is essential. Many factories have pounced on the growing market to sell cheap, low-quality products.

"A beginner's interest can be snuffed out by a sub-par ball. It's like trying to learn to play music on a bad instrument. When students lose their patience, they tend to give up," Jiuji says.

Jiuji has taught many people, but few have con-

tinued to study contact juggling. One of the main reasons is a shortage of chances to perform in public.

"When you perform on the street or another public place, security guards will immediately come to chase away your audience. But beginners can learn better on the street than playing alone at home. You can only see your shortcomings by watching others watch you," Jiuji says.

Without street experience, there is no hope for a contact juggler to find commercial opportunities like Jiuji has.

His favorite was a four-month stint at The Village at Sanlitun. He came every Sunday to perform together with the

African djembe band from Buu Club.

"Unlike tattoos, painting or music, which really suit private personal expression, juggling was born for performing. Without an audience you can never progress," Jiuji says.

Now the artist performs five commercial gigs per month. Every week he spends two days training in a gym. To catch up with current trends, he has taken to wearing a Beijing Olympics-inspired suit with LED lights.

"But I hope my performances can help give a stage to other new artists who want to do this professionally. When that happens, I can think about starting a school," Jiuji says.

New arrivals from local young designers

By Annie Wei

As more people seek and appreciate original designs, the Sanlitun area is becoming a prime location for small independent brands seeking a high concentration of affluent and, importantly, fashion-savvy consumers.

Beijing Today checked out two stores, Lu 12.28 and Yiwen Studio, at Nali Patio.

Lu 12.28 was established by Liu Lu, 28, two years ago. The brand's modern, cosmopolitan, chic and sexy style has attracted many fashionable and career-minded women. Liu's new collection (1,500 to 6,000 yuan per piece) employs lots of gold and fur.

Liu said she studies international fashion trends and then tailors her products for modern Chinese women.

Liu studied fashion in Paris and New York. When she was at New York's Parsons The New School of Design in 2006, one of her design pieces was shown in the windows of the legendary Saks Fifth Avenue store. She also worked with known stylists and assisted in styling Hollywood celebrities before returning to Beijing to establish her own brand.

Yiwen Studio was started by Yi Wen, 26, in Shanghai four years ago. She moved the store to Beijing last year.

Yi's style is refined, delicate, sophisticated and elegant, with a twist of fun. The designer said that a balance is necessary between vintage and new-age, and that women should dress smart.

For her new collection, Yi said she used different materials like Italian wool and Chinese silk to style clothes suitable for daily wear (1,000 to 6,000 yuan). Among her accessories is a handmade kimono belt.

Lu 12.28

Where: D305, 3rd floor, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Bei Jie, Chaoyang District

Open: noon – 8 pm

Tel: 5208 6105

Website: lu1228.com

Yiwen Studio

Where: D303, 3rd floor, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Bei Jie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am – 8 pm

Tel: 5208 6163



Photos provided by Lu12.28



Photos provided by YiWen Studio

Dessert pastries for that special occasion

By Annie Wei

From now through February 2, the eve of Chinese New Year, there will be many opportunities for people to prepare feasts at home. Dessert, as many trained cooks will tell you, can be the trickiest part, or at least the part that gets overlooked. Luckily, there are many places in the city for takeaway desserts that promise to be a big hit for children and adults.

Beijing Today scoped out two places to learn the secrets of the perfect dessert.

Cakes made of the finest ingredients

Le Parfait Cake is new to the Beijing pastry scene, but its owner believes his nine cake flavors are the best you'll find anywhere.

Qian Hongyu, the owner, said his cakes were "five-star" due to their quality ingredients. The store produces a limited number of cakes every day to ensure that each is of the highest order.

The nine flavors are mango mousse, dark chocolate mousse, milk chocolate and passion fruit mousse, mixed berries and white chocolate mousse, coconut banana mousse, plain cheesecake, assorted fruits cake, Tiramisu and pecan tart. All cakes come in four sizes

suitable for four to 16 people and cost 200 to 700 yuan.

The cakes have delicate tastes; the ones with fruit taste fresh with strong mango or berry flavors. We recommend the dark chocolate mousse, which has a strong chocolate flavor, and Tiramisu, which tastes authentic with a strong vanilla aroma, smooth chocolate and mellow coffee wine.

The store notes not just which ingredients are used but their country of origin: cream and butter from New Zealand, which has the cleanest farms; cocoa power from France; hazelnuts from the US or Turkey; mangoes from Malaysia and cherries from the US.

Le Parfait only uses vanilla from Vava'u Islands in Tonga, an island country in the South Pacific. The vanilla is planted organically and manually palliated. Such high-quality vanilla is normally only found in five-star hotels.

Qian said they could have saved money by using ingredients closer to home, but that customers taste the difference.

Le Parfait is also serious about details. Qian said that bakers' moods affect cake quality, so each

workstation is limited to making 30 cakes per day. The company refuses to outsource its work.

Qian said the company is very picky about every procedure: vanilla pods must be soaked in unsalted cream the night before; eggs are stirred by hand, not machines; cream butter is used instead of whipped toppings, which can extend a cake's shelf life and is commonly adopted by other bakeries in town.

La Parfait

A cake tastes best when it's freshly baked. Interested shoppers can order by calling 4006969906 or visiting leparfait.com.cn. We suggest you place the order five hours in advance. You can enjoy a 2 percent discount by ordering one day earlier. Orders of big celebration or wedding cakes must be placed 7 to 10 days in advance.

Open: 9 am – 9 pm

Cost: 200-700 yuan; delivery is free within Fifth Ring Road; an extra 10 yuan is required for delivery to Yizhuang District and Shangdi area; an extra 10 yuan will be charged for every 5 kilometers outside of Fifth Ring Road.



Mango mousse
Photos provided by Le Parfait



Coconut banana mousse

Best pastry chef in town

Charles Zhao, 39, the executive pastry chef of the Ritz Carlton on financial street, is a leader in his industry, with 21 years of experience.

He became well-known in 1997 when he led a team in the World Pastry Cup in Lyon, France, placing sixth among 18 teams and winning a gold medal in the chocolate pastry division.

Zhao said that pastry originated from the West, so authenticity of taste is important when judging a pastry's quality. He is very picky about his ingredients. "Ninety percent of the ingredients are imported," he said.

Zhao's creations add a Chinese twist, like flavors of jasmine, flower tea or Chinese pepper.

The Ritz-Carlton offers seasonal pastries. Right now, Zhao said their pastries are more about chocolate, cheese and fruits. "People love chocolate during the winter, and eating chocolate often is healthy," Zhao said.

"Fruity pastries are favored

year-round," Zhao said. "During the dry winter months, fruits can not only provide rich vitamins, but also restore some of the water your body needs."

The Ritz-Carlton offers a tea and pastry special for about 200 yuan. The kitchen takes cake orders as well – about 240 yuan for a five-inch cake.

The Ritz-Carlton, financial street

Where: 1 Jinchengfang Dong Jie, Jinrong Jie, Xicheng District
Open: 6:30 am – 8 pm
Tel: 6601 6666



Chocolate and fruity pastries,
200 yuan for two people

Photos provided by The Ritz-Carlton



Waffleboy

One of the leading local bakery brands for the past decade opened a new outlet at Sanlitun SoHo, with 26 flavors. We recommend its Burgundy cake (179 yuan), with layers of almond biscuit soaked in raspberry liquor, blueberry and black currant puree.

Where: 1st floor, Sanlitun SoHo, south of Yashow Market, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8590 0266

Comptoirs de France Bakery

The French bakery has two new stores at Pacific Century Place near Sanlitun and Xingfu Ercun. Apart from providing cakes (115 to 138 yuan per pound) and pastries (30 yuan), it also has breakfast viennoiseries (12 to 25 yuan), salad and sandwiches.

Where: Unit 102, Pacific Century Place, 2A Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6539 2005

Where: No 55-1, Xingfucun Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6416 2853

A story about love: Sino-South Korean musical gives new face to old theme

By He Jianwei

South Korean culture has been a big influence on Asian pop for at least a decade. Its music, soap operas and films – often romantic comedies – are widely popular, though sometimes for puzzling reasons: the plots always seem to involve love triangles.

Shooting Star: A Sino-Korean Love Story, co-produced by South Korean and Chinese artists, makes use once again of this cliché, though with a redeeming quality: it's a musical. It will debut in Beijing

on December 23.

Arrow, a Korean pop singer, has two problems: his girlfriend has just betrayed him and he's quarreling with his record company. With his friend's encouragement, he goes searching for the meaning of life in a small village in Guizhou Province, where ethnic Dong people live.

Predictably, he falls in love with a girl named A Ling, who is good at singing Kam Grand Choir, a polyphonic style listed by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage in 2009.

But Arrow's ex-girlfriend breaks up the affectionate couple.

Arrow goes back to South Korea so he doesn't disturb A Ling's peaceful life; A Ling gives up her love for Arrow so that he can reclaim his spotlight as a pop star.

Time passes, and Arrow achieves superstardom – but he does not feel happy. He remembers the simple life with A Ling in the village and realizes that's the life he wants to lead.

After winning an award at a music festival, Arrow announces his decision to quit

the industry.

But will A Ling take him back?

"This is the first time that Korean and Chinese artists jointly created a musical," said director Hyuimin Hwang, who is a famous ballet dancer and actor in many Korean musicals. "We hope to see the interaction between ancient Chinese folk music and Korean pop."

The musical will be performed in Chinese and Korean.



Shooting Star: A Sino-Korean Love Story

Where: Haidian Culture Center Theater, No. 28-1, Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian District

When: December 23 – January 9, 2011, 7:30 pm

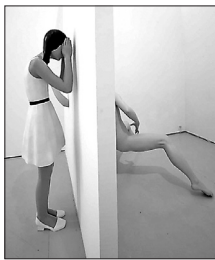
Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6200 8778, 6200 8875, 6200 8728

6 Saturday, December 11

Exhibition Absolute Dis-

tance
This exhibition presents works from 18 artists, discussing how people with HIV and AIDS aim to eliminate discrimination toward them.



Where: White Space Beijing, 255 Caochangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 3, 2011, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 2054

Movie



The Pursuit of Happyness (2006)

This movie is inspired by

the true story of Chris Gardner, a San Francisco salesman struggling to build a future for himself and his 5-year-old son.

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6270 1928

Nightlife Omnipotent

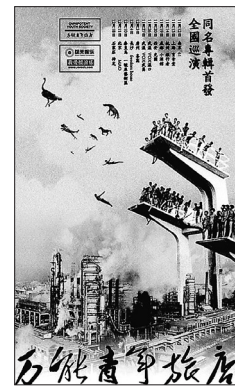
Established in the 1990s, this rock and blues band released its first album last month.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 50 yuan advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door

Tel: 6402 5080



5 Friday, December 10

Exhibition Layers – Recent Works by Xie Xiaozhe

This exhibition presents Xie's oil paintings and installations reflecting his interest in the printed word, libraries and archives.

Where: Chambers Fine Art, 249 Caochangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 4, 2011, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5127 3298

Movie

New Women (1935)

This silent film starring "Chinese Garbo" Ruan Lingyu is about the tragic life of an educated and modern young woman living in 1920s Shanghai, based on the true story

of Chinese actress Ai Xia, who committed suicide in 1934.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 4 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife

Orphan of House of Zhao

This play is adapted from a Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) play about a man living in 6th century BC who sacrifices his own son to save an orphan, raise him and help him get his revenge.

Where: Capital Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan, 40 yuan for students

Tel: 6524 6789

Sunday, December 12

Exhibition Three Queens – Exhibition of Artists: Liu Liyun, Liu Liyu and Sisi Qiu

This exhibition is a cross-over collaboration between two contemporary artists and one ballet dancer. Liu Liyun makes an installation with silk and canvas; Li Liyu creates an installation with glass necklaces and rings; Sisi Qiu dances among them.

Where: Long March Space, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao

Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 16, 2011, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5876 9392

Movie

Snatch (2000)

Set in the London criminal underworld, this British gangster comedy contains two intertwined plots: one dealing with the search for a stolen diamond, the other with a boxing promoter who finds himself under the thumb of a ruthless gangster.



Where: Crystal Club Coffee & Bar, 2/F Building 12, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 4 pm

Admission: 20 yuan for members, 30 yuan for non-members

Tel: 5960 3177

Nightlife Between Mountain and Water

As a singer, poet and painter, Zhang Jing has released an album of folk music; he also writes poetry and paints.

Where: Mako Livehouse, 36 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 5205 1112

Upcoming

Nightlife JungleMico Project

This new band combines electronica with blues.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: December 14, 9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in January

Concert

Pinchas Zukerman and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 3, 7:30 pm

Admission: 200-880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

American Symphony Orchestra

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: January 4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Dance

Nacho Duato's Choreography

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 13-15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 160-500 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Madame Butterfly

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 13-16, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Fuego! – Carmen Mota's First China Tour

Where: Beijing Exhibition Center Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: January 18-23, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,200 yuan

Tel: 5129 7260

Drama

Lao She's Short Stories: Five Acts of Life

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 1-9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Opera

Red Cliff

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 13-16, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Unhealthy lifestyles leave young couples barren

A growing problem

Friends see 35-year old Lisa as a fashionable, sexy and energetic woman with a knockout figure. She has advanced academic degrees, a high position in her office and a comfortable salary.

But the cost of this success was her ability to have a baby.

Lisa married at 27. To ensure an easy life, she insisted on not having a baby before 35. After countless nights of work and accompanying her clients to go drinking, she was promoted very quickly. To stay slim, she lived on a limited vegetarian diet.

Over the years, most of Lisa's friends have had babies. After months of planning and having sex during peak ovulation, Lisa still failed to get pregnant.

When she went to the hospital to ask for help, her doctor's words struck like a thunderbolt: Lisa's long-term unhealthy lifestyle combined with her age had rendered her permanently barren.

Her case is common among many young couples in China.

A recent epidemiology study found that more than 40 million people in China are unable to have children. The infertility rate among young couples jumped from 3 percent in 1989 to 12 percent last year, according to the Chinese Medicinal Association Reproductive Medicine Branch.

Qiao Jie, director of gynecology and obstetrics at Peking University Third Hospital, said many couples in China do not know how their lifestyles affect fertility and when to seek treatment.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), healthy couples in which the woman is under 35 and who have a regular sex without contraception for one year can be considered infertile. The organization anticipates infertility to be the 21st century's third most serious ailment after cancer and cardiovascular disease.

By Han Manman

Colorful nightlife, endless beer, late nights of work and magic diet pills seem to be essential parts of the modern youth lifestyle. But with them comes an unwanted side effect: infertility.

New research shows that the infertility rate in China is skyrocketing among young couples due to unhealthy lifestyles, stress and environmental pollution.

Causes of infertility

Fertility in men and women is often due to preventable human factors rather than hereditary ailments and blocked fallopian tubes.

The most common cause of infertility today is an unhealthy lifestyle. A man's lifestyle has direct effects on his sperm count. Men who are active smokers, alcoholics and drug abusers have a lower sperm count than other men. Tight pants and warm baths can also temporarily lower a man's sperm count.

But women's ovulation is more often the cause of persistent infertility. Stress, age and cervical conditions, like cervical incompetence and insufficient cervical mucus, are the most common causes of infertility in women.

Qiao said that for many women, age is a major factor. The preference for later motherhood is a recent social trend — but it has brought heartache to an increasing number of women who are learning they waited too long to have a baby.

"A woman's ideal age for conception is before 30 and no later than 35," said Pang Lihua from WHO Collaborating Center for Research in Reproductive Health and Population Science.

"As you get older, the quality of your

ovum begins to wane. This is what makes it tricky to get pregnant and increases the risk of birth defects," Pang said.

Pang said abortion is another contributing factor to infertility.

"Abortion may be an option for women who find themselves with an unplanned pregnancy. Many women have multiple abortions. But each abortion can increase the difficulty of becoming pregnant in the future," Pang said.

Keeping stress under control is equally vital when trying to get pregnant. Excessive stress can cause irregular ovulation or halt the menstrual cycle.

Stress in men can also impact fertility. Stress can lower men's testosterone production, which in turn impacts sperm quality and quantity.

Obesity and poor diets also contribute to infertility.

If you already follow a healthy diet, exercise regularly and rarely indulge in alcohol and pregnancy remains elusive after a year, it may be time to see an infertility specialist. If you are older than 40, make an appointment after only six months of trying, Qiao said.

Tips to maximize fertility

There may be things about your body that you can't control, so compensate by improving where you can to maximize your chances of conception.

When your body is at its peak, so is your fertility. Here are some guidelines to help both you and your partner increase fertility:

1. Exercise moderately. Strenuous exercise can lower sperm count in men and may cause women to stop ovulating. Moderate exercise can be beneficial to maintaining a normal body weight and reducing stress.

2. Maintain a healthy weight. Women who are over or underweight are at risk of fertility failure. They also have lowered success with fertility procedures like artificial insemination. Eat a diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains and one that is also low in saturated fats.

3. Stop smoking tobacco. Smoking

tobacco has a seriously detrimental effect on the fertility of both women and men. Women who smoke can deplete their ovaries and suffer early menopause. Older women trying to get pregnant are particularly vulnerable. Female smokers also have an increased risk of miscarriage or stillbirth. Men who smoke can experience a lowered sperm count, decreased sperm mobility and abnormal sperm that will be unable to fertilize an egg.

4. Avoid caffeine. Recent studies suggest that daily caffeine intake before or during pregnancy may increase the chance of a miscarriage. High levels of caffeine consumption may also be associated with decreased fertility.

5. Follow the menstrual cycle. The menstrual cycle is generally considered to be a marker of female health, and a normal cycle is essential to getting pregnant. Women who have irregular periods

or no periods should take this as a sign that all is not well down below. Diabetes and thyroid disorders, along with a host of other chronic health problems, often interrupt ovulation; the medications used to treat these disorders can also result in irregular menstrual cycles.

6. Eat balanced foods. A balanced diet is a key to all the issues of health, including fertility problems. There are many foods that can increase the chances of conception like seeds, nuts, green leafy vegetables and dairy products like cheese and milk. Fresh fruits like kiwis and yams can also restore fertility. Eat foods rich in vitamins A, C and E, along with some of minerals like folic acid and selenium.

7. Get a preconception check-up. A checkup is important so both partners can identify fertility-related problems. Some can be corrected by simple treatment like fertility-enhancing drugs.



Catch the last autumnal beauty in northern Beijing



The Great Wall at Dushikou was built mostly with stone, as opposed to bricks.

Photos by Dadong

By Zhang Dongya

Autumn is always considered the best season in Beijing, not only for the comfortable weather but also for its transience – before you know it, the bitterness of winter has arrived.

This year, autumn has lingered a little longer, so people can enjoy the outdoors even now.

Some veteran members of Luye, an outdoor community, developed a loop itinerary for enjoying autumnal beauty in north Beijing and neighboring Hebei Province.



Dushikou was an important pass during ancient times.



Some watchtowers, originally built with bricks, have been partially broken.

Driving to Baihe Canyon

Going here will take one to three days, depending how much time you spend at each stop on the way.

Driving along Beijing-Chengde Expressway to State Road 111, urban life gradually fades away, replaced by mountains and far-stretching fields.

The first stop is Tanghekou, a town located in mountains north of Huairou District. On the way are rows of bald poplar trees, with big birds' nests resting on the branches.

The Bai and Tang rivers flow through town, adding to the scenery. There are few vehicles and passersby. Cyclists can be seen on the road, chugging along leisurely.

Large swathes of the Boston ivy on

roadside rocks have turned red. Some trees have retained the last of their red leaves, which dot the forest.

Bai River is abundant with water this month. On windless sunny days, it is tranquil with large patches of yellow weeds. If lucky, one can spot birds flying over the water.

Baihe Canyon is known as a *baili hualang*, a term referring to the miles of beautiful scenery that resemble scroll paintings. The best view is from the entrance of the canyon northeast of Baihebu Reservoir. Cliffs stand along both sides, while a winding river flows in the canyon and faraway mountains are clearly visible.

Ancient pass along stone Great Wall

Driving along State Road 112, you will enter Chicheng County in Hebei Province. Along the way, you will pass Yunzhou Reservoir dam, the location of a splendid granite cliff. There's also a large area of golden pines, part of Dushikou Town, and an ancient pass that was built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Dushikou, or Mono-rock Pass, is located in Chicheng County upstream from Bai River. At the entrance is a giant rock, which lends the pass its name. A big inscription reads: "a rock flying from the sky."

There are stairs to the top of the rock, where a pavilion stands. Several trees grow on the rock. Statues of creatures such as monkeys and horses abound, but they have

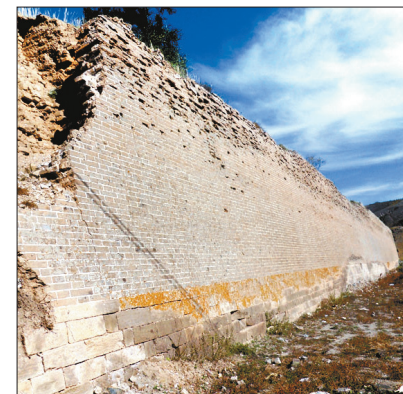
all suffered the effects of erosion.

In ancient times, Ming Emperor Zhu Di inspected troops in the pass, while Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) Emperor Kangxi quartered there during the war with Galdan Khan in 1696.

Deeper in, visitors will be able to see the Great Wall zigzagging among the mountains. Sections here were built with stone, offering a look different from Beijing's brick-made Wall.

The stones were stacked with rocks, without slurry, making them less durable. In Beijing, few stone sections of the Great Wall remain (Jiuyan Tower at the Jiankou Great Wall is an example of a stone section that's weathered time).

Continued on page 21...



Dushikou Great Wall, built during the Ming Dynasty, has kept its original appearance.



Flocks of sheep and cattle can be seen roaming the slopes.



On the way to Chicheng, you will pass Yunzhou Reservoir dam, the location of a splendid granite cliff.



Lama Mountain has a peak that resembles an eagle's head and a temple located at its "claws."



Birch forests in Fengning gleam red due to their red bark.



Lightning River at sunset

...continued from page 20

The northern side of the Dushikou Great Wall, located in the town, has been partially destroyed, but the southern section remains in good condition. Only some watchtowers, originally built with bricks, have been partly broken.

Next to the wall are fields. During

the summer, corn and sunflower grows abundantly. Now, only straws and seedlings remain.

Next to Dushikou is Bingshanliang, or Iceberg Mount, located on the border of Chicheng and Guyuan County in Hebei. With a peak of 2,200 meters, it is the

highest point in Bashang, the grassland area in Hebei.

Bingshanliang was also a vital pass during ancient times, especially in warfare.

There are many giant rocks on the ridge, some in peculiar shapes and forms.

Some sections of the Great Wall extend here, but all that's left of most of them is ruins. The few watchtowers that remain are considered to be towers of the highest altitude.

Flocks of sheep and cattle roam the slopes, adding vitality to the vast grassland.

Lightning River in Guyuan

The Luan River in Guyuan County forms unique scenery on the grassland. Its section in Guyuan features many bends, forming Shandian (lightning) River.

The best place to view the river is

at the top of Zhuanfo ("rotation around Buddha") Mountain, which gained its name from a temple at the peak (only a pile of stones remain). There's a gentle slope you can drive up. At the top, you

get a bird's-eye view of Lightning River, which looks like silver ribbons on the grassland.

Water is abundant this time of year, so the view is simply stunning. At sunset,

vestigial rays reflect off the water, casting a reddish hue on the bends.

From Lightning River, the road loops back. You can stay at hotels along the way.

Attractions in Fengning

On the return trip, Fengning Manchu Autonomous County, Hebei marks a major stop. Fengning is adjacent to Beijing and Inner Mongolia. It has a vast area of grassland, which is the nearest to Beijing.

Erdaohezi Village is a village that has appeared in many of director Zhang Yimou's movies, such as *The Road Home*, starring Zhang Ziyi. It features rural scenery with

hamlets, rivers and hills.

Hills here have gentle slopes; on the side that's exposed to more of the sun is grass; on the other side are birches. Golden birch leaves have fallen, but the forest gleams red due to the trees' red bark.

Locals say it will snow soon, which will make the slope a popular place for sledding.

Besides grasslands, Fengning also has peculiar rocky mountains.

One called Lama Mountain has a peak that resembles an eagle's head and a temple located at its "claws." The temple was supposedly built during Kangxi Emperor's reign during Qing. Many locals burn incense in the temple.

Another attraction on the mountain is

Fozhu Cave, a 500-meter natural cave. There are 18 huge rocks covering the exterior, resembling a string of prayer beads and giving the cave its name (Buddha Prayer Beads).

The cave, with special Moulin, is considered evidence of ancient glaciers, so it attracts geologists and those interested in natural history.

Finale in Labagoumen

From Fengning, the return trip to Beijing begins. On the way to Labagoumen, a town of Manchu people in

Huairou District, you'll pass Huairou's reddening leaves and a large area of birch forests.

Take some time to walk through it. Thick leaves pave the ground. With only two or three others in the deep forest, this

is the rare chance for you to enjoy a bit of serenity before reentering the hectic world of urban life.



Now is the perfect time to visit the areas around northern Beijing.

Photos by Dadong

Dining

Starry, starry night

Start off a "star-studded" affair at Aria Restaurant with a four-course Hollywood-themed festive dinner and your favorite festive cocktail, wines and a flute of Veuve Clicquot to toast. Each ticket includes a post-dinner flute of Moët et Chandon at Aria Bar's Glam party. The package costs 888 per person.

Then be the star of your dreams on New Year's Eve at Aria Bar as it lights up Hollywood-style. Come dressed to the nines and be dazzled by paparazzi-style cameras. Allie Webb and her quartet entertain with acid jazz while the bar serves cocktails and canapes, wines, Champagne and spirits during the countdown to the New Year. The 100-yuan package includes a flute of Moët et Chandon.

Where: Aria Restaurant and Aria Bar, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: December 24-31, Aria Restaurant, 6 pm - 10 pm, Aria Bar 9 pm - 2 am

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 36

Hotel



Hilton Beijing Capital Airport teaches orphans to bake

On November 26, 20 children from Beijing Sun Village Special Children Aid Center visited Hilton Beijing Capital Airport to decorate cookies with the general managers of Hilton Hotels throughout Greater China.

The event began with buffet lunch at 360 restaurants. The children were given a chance to decorate their chef's hats and aprons before being led to the kitchen to study cookie making with the hotel's pastry chef.

Hilton Beijing Capital Airport said it attaches great importance to local community development and contributes to vulnerable local groups. Sun Village is a charity organization for children whose parents are imprisoned.

Dream Wedding at Shangri-La

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, in partnership with *Cosmo Bride* magazine, announced the winners of its first "My Dream Wedding at Shangri-La" creative competition at China World Submit Wing on November 29.

The competition began June 26 to mark the launch of Shangri-La's Signature Wedding, a one-stop-shop wedding service available at all Shangri-La branded hotels in China. The competition encouraged would-be couples to share their ideas for dream weddings using text, graphic or video media.

The 85 entries were voted on by more than 100,000 people. Japanese bridal gown designer Yumi Katsura, wedding planner I Do and a jewelry brand Chow Tai Fook sponsored a bridal fashion show before the award ceremony and awarded jewelry to the top winners.

Hilton's intimate hotel wins award for third year

Hilton Beijing Wangfujing received yet another remarkable endorsement by the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences, snatching the 2011 International Five-Star Diamond Award at a recent ceremony.

The International Five-Star Diamond Award represents the highest and most prestigious achievement in the industry, and is recognized and sought after by tourism and hospitality professionals worldwide.

"We are indeed honored to receive, for the third consecutive year, this highly-coveted award that recognizes achievement and quality which reflects the serious commitment of every team member towards

delivering the Hilton brand, customer services and hospitality to all our guests and customers alike," said Nils-Arne Schroeder, general manager of Hilton Beijing Wangfujing.

Hilton Beijing Wangfujing welcomes composer Joe Hisaishi

The Hilton Beijing Wangfujing welcomed Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi, who recently performed an exclusive concert in town at the National Center for the Performing Arts. Hisaishi conducted the National Center for the Performing Arts' Concert Hall Orchestra in a two-hour concert, giving renditions of his symphonic pieces "Links" and "MKWAJU 1981-2009." The musician, known for the Oscar-winning scores to *Spirited Away* and *Departures*, accompanied the orchestra on piano.



Ritz-Carlton hosts charity bazaar

The Ritz-Carlton, Beijing celebrated the start of the holiday season with its "Share of Love" Christmas Lighting and Charity Bazaar event last week.

The Charity Bazaar had raffles, challenging games, a yummy food stall and exciting prizes. The indoor market offered exquisite handmade bags, Lenovo laptops signed by Olympic champions, autographed audio CDs, limited edition perfumes, travel accessories, complimentary room stays at Phulay Bay Ritz-Carlton resort and a private night at the Ritz-Carlton Suite with one of its chefs.

The Charity Bazaar raised money for Right To Play (RTP) China, a non-profit organization using specially-designed sports and play programs to improve health, build life skills and foster peace for children and communities affected by war, poverty and disease.

Executive Suite Package with CHI Treatment

Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing is offering a luxury getaway to its Executive Suite with an exquisite spa retreat at CHI, The Spa.

This offer includes exclusive access to the Valley Wing Lounge; complimentary Valley Wing Lounge beverages and light snacks from 10 am to 2 am plus an evening cocktail and canapes; free two-hours use of the meeting room in its Business Center; a

Aviation

Singapore Airlines and Garuda Indonesia sign codeshare

From December 1, customers on Singapore Airlines and Garuda Indonesia will have more flights to choose from between Singapore and Denpasar (Bali).

Under the new codesharing agreement, the two airlines will share on all flights between Singapore and Denpasar (Bali). Singapore Airlines operates three flights per day on the route while Garuda has daily flights.

"Garuda's customers will be able to enjoy convenient connections from Singapore to other cities, while SIA's customers may benefit from Garuda's links to many other domestic points in Indonesia from Denpasar," said Ng Kian Wah, Singapore Airlines' senior vice president of sales regions.

one-hour CHI Balance treatment at CHI, The Spa; a round trip limousine transfer between the airport to the hotel; and complimentary daily buffet breakfast.

Where: Shangri-La Beijing, 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: Until December 31

Cost: From 2,080 yuan per night

Tel: 6841 2211

Traders Club sensation

Experience a spectrum of special privileges at Traders Club in the heart of Beijing's CBD.

Enjoy a Traders Club Deluxe room; buffet breakfast, all-day coffee, tea and soft drinks plus pre-dinner cocktails in the evening; free pressing of one suit upon arrival; free shoe shining; free use of the meeting rooms for two hours per day in Traders Club; food and beverage credits of 300 yuan per room per night; guaranteed late check-out until 3 pm; free broadband Internet access in-room and wireless connection in the hotel's public area; free use of hotel's gymnasium, Jacuzzi, steam and sauna rooms; free access to the heated swimming pool at the adjacent China World Hotel; and cross-signing privileges at the adjacent China World Hotel and Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing

Where: Traders Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 31

Cost: from 1,200 yuan per night

Tel: 6505 2277



Tree lighting at Grand Millennium Beijing

On December 1, some 200 guests attended the tree lighting ceremony at Grand Millennium Beijing. The tree was lit by General Manager Leon Lee and Charles Lai, vice president of Sales and Marketing Greater China for Millennium Hotels and Resorts.

Students from International School of Beijing performed a Christmas play and sang carols to the guests. The hotel also hired a soprano singer who performed for those in attendance. After the ceremony, the Havana Bar house band carried the rest of the night's entertainment. (By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Please do chicken right or I will fix you!



By Wang Yu

Speaking Chinglish need not always lead to embarrassment. Sometimes it shows the flexibility of language and can be fun.

I have a friend, May, who used to work at KFC's China headquarters. I can't say the job was great – her daily routine was boring, and everyone had to check in by 9 am sharp. She complained a lot. But there were undeniably times when she reaped the benefits of working for a Fortune 500 company.

At the end of last year, the company held its annual dinner party in a lavish spa hotel in the suburbs. Before the merriment begins, some important decision-makers give some serious speeches. The employees pretend to listen carefully.

Usually nothing of note happens, but on this night, there was a classic moment. One particular officer gave everyone a scare.

"You know our slogan in English is 'We do chicken right.' I hope everyone takes it seriously, because we are professionals who do chicken," the officer said.

Silence. People tried their best to not laugh. The officer was soon aware of his Chinglish translation.

"We do chicken right" means "we cook chicken the right way." But the officer translated the slogan directly into Chinese as "women shi zuo ji de."

In Chinese, *ji*, the word for chicken, can be slang for "prostitute." By saying "zuo ji," the officer could have meant, "We are professional prostitutes."

Maybe that's why some people

prefer KFC to McDonald's.

To many Chinese youth, it's humorous to poke fun at mistranslations between the two languages. Members of my last band, The Roy, liked to use Coldplay's lyric "I will try to fix you" from the song "Fix You" to illustrate this point.

I do not know if Chris Martin, Coldplay lead singer, understands Chinese. He may have intended the song to be about the need to help people out of trouble. But in Chinese, *fix* – *xiuli* – is slang for beating someone, physically, until a concept has been ingrained in them.

Point is, sometimes Chinglish can be lighthearted and fun.

"Maybe he said that intentionally," May said about that KFC officer. "If so, that was smart."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Kangle – happy and healthy

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

My co-worker tells me that most Chinese people are not willing to say "sex" directly, hence the common misconception that sexuality is repressed in China. So, judging by the Chinese version of the sign, this place does not seem like a "sex shop."

In fact, "adult stores," such as this one in Shanghai, are everywhere – almost as common as a Tim Horton's Donut Shop in Canada. Now, before you all get sleazy and disgusting, this kind of "heath store" (*baojian pin*, the last three characters in Chinese) is often staffed by a kindly upper-middle-aged



auntie in a nurse's uniform, definitely not of the Britney Spears fashion, who will happily weigh you out a one-jin

purple dildo, as well as a half-pound pink one. At least, that's how the joke goes in my family. We so-called grown-ups had a lot of fun imagining what we might purchase there, after a "happy and healthy" (*kangle*, fifth and sixth characters) store – with full-on window display – opened three doors down from the daycare I worked at.

But we have left the third and fourth characters on the Chinese sign out. They are both the same and say *bang*, which can mean "excellent," as in, *Ni zhen bang!* ("You are great" ... cue heavy breathing ... now you can be as perverted as you want to be.)

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. The meaning of expectations, fortunes and futures

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): A few days ago I came across this phrase and wondered whether the usage of the word "future" in plural is right. I went to consult English dictionaries and under the entry "future" they all state that when it means "time to come," it is used in a singular form. For instance, The development of future events will prove his prediction correct. He cherishes a future hope of becoming a translator. We hope that our future years will be happy. "Future" may also mean a chance of success or prosperity: He is a young man with a future. When it takes a plural form it means commodities or stocks bought or sold to be received or delivered at a future date. It is totally another thing! For instance, Cotton futures on the New York stock market fell to \$1.50 a bale. So, in the sample, it can never be "futures." The right way to say it is: the meaning of expectations, fortunes and future.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): It seems to me that we are pluralizing many more non-countable nouns than before. From sheeps (as a cutesy joke) to homeworks (a common student error) to materials – as in, "Let me go over the test materials and get back to you about it" – which now sounds all right, when it wasn't about 15 years ago. We'll have to see, long into our "futures," if these changes are an evolution of language or a de-evolutional language breakdown.

2. The team participated rescue missions.

ZS: There is an important grammatical element missing here. As we know, to participate is an intransitive verb when it means to have a share; take part; share in an undertaking. When it is an intransitive verb, it must be "to participate in something." For instance, The principal participated in the class discussion. The teacher participated in the children's games. It is an equivalent of "to take part in." So, the right way to say it is: The team participated in rescue missions. However, the verb can be a transitive verb when it means to possess or enjoy in common with others; partake. For instance, "When I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy" (Mary W. Shelley). So, you see the meaning of the transitive and intransitive "participate" is different. Don't be confused by them.

TBZ: I believe that the first intransitive example is more common, and so it is best to add the preposition "in." "In" has to do with a period of time and, in the above example, it is the period of time in which the team was involved with different rescue missions.

3. Crew members of the team

ZS: The problem with this sentence is redundancy and repetition. It shows that the writer does not understand the true meaning of the word "team" and "crew." As we know, "crew" originally means the men needed to work a ship or man an aircraft. It may mean a group of people working on the same aircraft or acting together; for instance, a crew of loggers, a crew of maintenance workers. The crew was (or were) annoyed at the captain's decision to visit the port. All 60 passengers and crew members perished in the crash. The aircraft has a crew of four. So, it is not right to say: crew members of the team. You either say the members of the team or the members of the crew.

TBZ: "Crew members of the team" makes it sound like the team comprises various types of members, "crew" type being only one sort of team member.

Inception (2010)



Movie of the week

It is easy to see why *Inception* won international acclaim. It has a good concept, good story, excellent characters and top actors.

Director Christopher Nolan, drawing on *The Matrix*'s "bullet time," creates the physics of the world of the dream. While the movie's philosophy may seem shallow, *Inception* still delivers charming lines, masterfully executed visual effects and star performance.

Leonardo DiCaprio's performance in particular shows that his new "tough guy Leo" persona is far more effective than his former one as a teen idol.

Synopsis

Dominic Cobb and point man Arthur are an independent team always on "extraction" missions. The two create dreams in the minds of their targets and crack in to steal secrets for their business rivals.

When they fail a mission to break into the mind of a Japanese businessman, Saito, the former target becomes their new client in a mission to bring down the Fischer family's empire. But cracking into the mind of the new heir Robert Fischer may be mission impossible for the crew.

Scene 1

(After failing in their attempt on Saito, the Japanese businessman offers Cobb and Arthur a new job.)

Cobb (C): What do you want from us?

Saito (S): Inception. Is it possible?

Arthur (A): Of course not.

S: If you can steal an idea from someone's mind why can't you plant one there instead?

A: OK, here's me planting an idea in your head. I say, "Don't think about elephants." What are you thinking about?

S: Elephants.

A: Right. But it's not your idea, because you know I gave it to you. The subject's mind can always trace the genesis of the idea. True inspiration's impossible to fake.

C: That's not true.

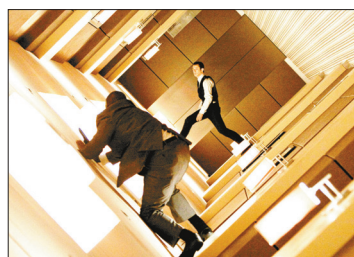
S: Can you do it?

C: Are you offering me a choice? Because I can find my own way to square things (1) with Cobol.

S: Then you do have a choice.

C: Then I choose to leave, sir.

Scene 2



(Cobb comes to Miles, his teacher and father-in-law, for a new dream architect.)

C: You never did like your office, did you?

Miles (M): No space to think in that broom cupboard. Is it safe for you to be here?

C: Extradition between France and the United States is a bureaucratic nightmare, you know that.

M: I think they might find a way to make it work in your case.

C: Look, I, uh, brought these for you to give to the kids when you have a chance.

M: It'll take more than the occasional stuffed animal to convince those children they still have a father.

C: I'm just doing what I know. I'm doing what you taught me.

M: I never taught you to be a thief.

C: No, you taught me to navigate people's minds. But after what happened there weren't a whole lot of legitimate ways for me to use that skill.

M: What are you doing here, Dom?

C: I think I found a way home.

It's a job for some very, very powerful people. People who I believe can fix my charges (2) permanently. But I need your help.

M: You're here to corrupt one of my brightest and best.

C: You know what I'm offering. Let them decide for themselves.

M: Money.

C: Not just money. You remember. It's the chance to build cathedrals, entire cities, things that never existed, things that couldn't exist in the real world.

M: So you want me to let someone else follow you into your fantasy?

C: They don't actually come into the dream. They just design the levels and teach them to the dreamers. That's all.

M: Design it yourself.

C: Mal won't let me.

M: Come back to reality, Dom. Please.

C: Reality. Those kids, your grandchildren they're waiting for their father to come back home. That's their reality. And this job, this last job, that's how I get there. I would not be standing here if I knew any other way. I need an architect who's as good as I was.

M: I've got somebody better.

Scene 3

(Cobb needs a new team. He comes to Eames, the best forger.)

C: Inception. Now, before you bother telling me it's impossible, let me ...

Eames (E): No, it's perfectly possible. It's just bloody difficult.

C: Interesting. Because Arthur keeps telling me it can't be done.

E: Hmm. Arthur. You still working with that stick-in-the-mud (3)?

C: He is good at what he does, right?

E: Oh, he's the best, but he has no imagination.

C: Not like you.

E: Listen, if you're gonna perform inception, you need imagination.

C: Let me ask you something. Have you done it before?

E: We tried it. Uh, we got the idea in place, but it didn't take.

C: You didn't plant it deep enough?

E: No, it's not just about depth. You need the simplest version of the idea in order for it to grow naturally in your subject's mind. It's a subtle art. So, what is this idea that you need to plant?

C: We need the heir of a major corporation to dissolve his father's empire.

E: Right there you have various political motivations and anti-monopolistic sentiments and so forth (4). But all of that stuff, it's, um ... It's really at the mercy of your subject's prejudice, you see? What you have to do is start at the absolute basic.

C: Which is what?

E: The relationship with the father. Do you have a chemist?

C: No, not yet.

E: Right. OK, well, there's a man here, Yusuf. He, uh, formulates his own versions of the compounds.

C: Why don't you take me there?

E: Once you've lost your tail (5). The man at the bar.

Vocabulary

1. **square things:** to resolve
2. **fix the charge:** to drop the lawsuit
3. **stick-in-the-mud:** one who is always obeying the rules
4. **so forth:** et cetera
5. **tail:** slang for someone who is following you.

(By Wang Yu)